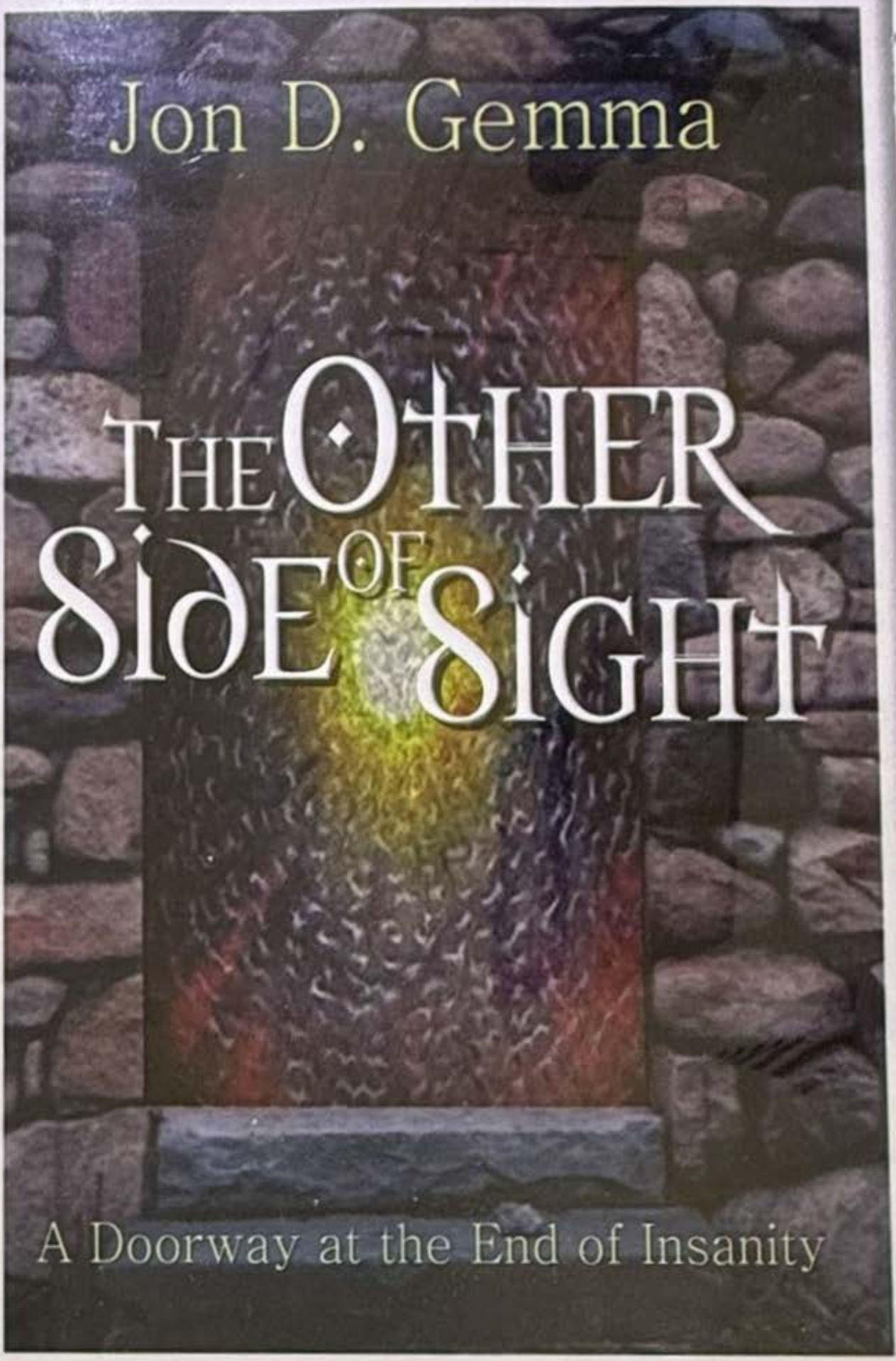
Jon D. Gemma
THE OTHER SIDE OF SIGHT
A Doorway at the End of Insanity

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(A Doorway at the End of Insanity)

By

Jon D. Gemma

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ISBN: 1-4033-2941-9 (Ebook)
ISBN: 1-4033-2942-7 (Softcover)

This book is printed on acid free paper.

1stBooks - rev. 9/6/02

An autobiography by Jon D Gemma

When I began this project my mother insisted that I was setting myself up for the greatest defeat of my life. One in which there was to be no return form the madness of my own folly in falling off the edge of the earth yet another time. Better that I lie down and let the world devour me as a shell of a man that knew in the wisdom of his mother's fears to never try for the rest of my life. Such was always the work of my parents who raised me to doubt my potential the eternal journey of my damned existence. Yet I listened elsewhere in the lost forests of faith as the mouths of the many believers held a different opinion of me. And I came to believe in myself as someone that was unique in my own ability. I knew that I was doing something that I would one day look back on in the pride of my own amazement as I puzzle about the true test of my character. In the process of my writing my mother came to me with a dream. It caught her in the awe of what I was truly capable of as the huddled child of pain she had always known me to be. I was outside of my parent's house and as she was sleeping I called her into the back yard to witness the fear of insanity that I could conquer in the work of miracles that tread about the power of my will. In the midst of my presence was a large carnivorous dinosaur that shook the earth with a savage fury as it waited to slaughter my soul and feast upon my words. She told me it was a ferocious T-Rex ready to consume me with its thrashing jaws. It stood there in an uproar that was to rip my life further into the

misery of damnation in which return to the living would be an implausible task. I gazed at my mother and said, "Look what I can do mom!" "Be careful," she cried as I picked this beast up over my head and proceeded to dance through the yard in a joyous event of having overthrown the Satan of my insanity in the magic of my will. So to my mother I dedicate this book. Look what I can do mom.

Born Unto Being
Being is of an island
By the means of nowhere
Centered in the silence of seclusion
And held in the hands of the moment
With the call of immense watery fields
Stretching their suggestions
To the edges of perception
And the ether of infinite sights to imagine
Gathered in formations of weightless reverie
And dancing across the brilliance of the sphere
But just as much to gaze at a dream
There comes a tragedy of space
And a wasteland of ways
And for each of all successions
Gripping to the very last
But succumbing to the absurd

Every life can be collected as a group of its own memories and thoughts. This assortment of energy can be conducted as an inner process or more unusually one that has an outward projection. As the years tend to wear us into the weathered forms of life's often-disorderly and chaotic conditions we lose touch with the substructure of an exquisite origin that cradled us in preexistence. It's imperative to take hold of who we are and everything we have been in a reunification of ourselves. Or at least I imagine the process should be. We all need to feel that our lives are important in some way. If not to someone else than at least to ourselves. In society we find importance in positions. But what about those who fall beneath the grand design set forth by society? Some of us succumb to the perils of a mental illness that pulls beneath the surface of civilization. Our contributions can take on the form of a raw intellectual balancing act. In this world of enlightenment and technological miracles we find irrelevance in a vast majority of many existences that all have something unique to share. But many of us find ourselves overflowing in the fountain of a realm that has incorporated so intuitively into our psyches the idols of material existence. Our identities burn much deeper in the impassioned questions of children as we relate to creation. Many of us live and breathe the pursuit of happiness as the system manufactures us to believe that it can be found in the absurdity of its mundane structure. And too many of us are overlooked for the meaning of our parts that are presumably infinitesimal in an ocean that does in fact create ripples with the touch of rain. As being a

design unto oneself that has been locked into a tragedy of reflection this journey through the continuance of age further perpetuates a life of submergence. But some of us refuse to be devoured by the insatiable appetite of an invisible nature. Which is in alliance with the bizarre enterprise of a seemingly meaningless fabrication of reality. Our faith in the assemblages of a secular world can starve in the deprivation of disappointments and must somehow be developed in a union with the characteristics of our own integrity. We strive towards the evolution of realization in our growth and strengthen our inner sanctuaries to become the eye that gazes into a passionate eternity in the violence of the most furious hurricane. Our minds need to be fortified in maintenance just as though they are machines of a divine energy that have been challenged to unite. When we reach the end of the reel that comes to gather our dynamics for some of us it means toiling through intestines that are ferocious with the uncertainty of existence. I imagine that the majority of individuals who have walked this earth have tasted the misfortune of losing their minds to the prisons of circumstance, and more currently to the collective horror that gave birth to a new millenium of terror. We all cry out at some point and madness is so fluently embedded in the history of mankind. In today's world of increasingly heightened and justified paranoia the touch of a feverish mania is becoming feared beyond compassion. The fruits of a wildly accelerated process can be the violent waves of a tragic chaos if one never desires to tame the fire in conjunction with civilized conduct. But this terrifying condition that can actually go as

far as to desert our existential being in the impossibility of ourselves can also be harnessed into a blossoming masterpiece of idealized beauty. The sheer concentration of creativity into the kinetic energy of a transcendental system is capable of texturing a joy that is unimaginable. The process of reeling in the orchestration of life's symphony should always consist of listening to something greater than the gravity of our own nature. So of things that I remember these are the things that I remember most:

On the twenty-first of February 1974 I became united with an environment that was filled with the attributes of alarming discomfort. I imagine I had materialized into a purgatory of bizarre sensations that had come upon me in a great trauma. My mother lay in excruciating pain with my father by her side. I imagine they were both very much in love at the time. The result of their love was about to unfold in the innocent birth of what was to become a burden. To them I was the miracle of life in the rising sun of a glorious garden. But something was wrong in an anarchy of neurological lightning. I came into this world screaming in the pain of existence and I continued to scream on and off as if someone was making surgical incisions in the tissues of my mind as I adjusted to perception. The doctor claimed that my mother's womb was placid. He used forceps to deliver me, which left a faint red mark in the center of my forehead. My father cried tears of joy when he saw me for the first time, which was a rare thing for my father. But if I could have talked I probably might have shouted and screamed with a raving lunacy to be returned to the gentle shelter of

my mother's womb. I had been in the Eden of my life surrounded by the warmth of a cushioned protection. I was expelled like a monstrous feces that was forced to eat the fruit of a bitter realm. If I had the ability to form thoughts in the flowing way of words I may not have thought the experience to be a birth into a new world. But rather a death of an elegant enclosure that held me serenely pure in the process of an immaculate mind.

I can't remember anything from the first few years of my life. There seems to be a period of grace before we are truly subjected to the frenetic monsters of mental activity that come to stalk us in memory. My foremost recollections are of painful migraine headaches that increased in severity and frequency once I was placed into Head Start. Head Start introduced me to a variety of different people and experiences that reinforced my interpretation of this world as a collection of situations that I really didn't want to be in. I wasn't enthused to be in another foreign environment surrounded by the unusual life forms of this alien structure we know as society. Change never came easily for me and adapting to the organizations of public constructions made me wonder if this great world of ours wasn't just a series of assemblages that glorified their own nonsense. It seemed to be a senselessness of such a magnitude that it went as far as to have already brought the world to war twice. I had a hard time grasping it when I was young and I never acknowledged my citizenship as a division of mankind. I was a mix of many nationalities and I always felt as though I belonged to the earth. In my childhood we lived closer

to the density of the city and America was an integration of every walk of life. When I was a child I automatically assumed the belonging of birth that appointed each of us the fragile and united form of the human being. It was an idealism of a harmonious world that was founded in the good faith of children as we played amidst the trail of blood that history carried. The greater truths were not in the weathering of the world and even as a child nothing weighed against the design of an internal reality that was developing creatively in my personality. I always had difficulties adjusting to the systemization of society. I was a child whose imagination was an open country of a Native American upbringing. And I had a hard time understanding why personalities overwhelmed me so much that I regressed into a state of submission. To be around new people and new situations that left me exposed in the domination of other's will was very stressful for me. People were very strange and their ways were as bizarre as an alien probing. It was the merciless disease of the construction that had afflicted them all and they were going to spread it to me. I was so much happier in the relaxation of an atmosphere that whirled like the music of Mozart in the comforts of home.

On one occasion an adult forced me to eat peas. I remember this clearly as if it happened in an episode of the *Outer Limits* that was distorted with the overpowering of an adult world. I was only about five or six. Just the sight of peas made me sick to my stomach. "I can't eat them." I said in a voice of apology. I was hoping for an understanding. Don't you know the effect they will have on me? I

thought. Something in me thought that my mental processes could be read and the adult could see the anguish she was putting me through at that moment. At least I thought she could read my face, but she insisted that I eat the peas. I didn't understand why I was forced to do something that I knew was wrong for me. The disease of this rigid composition was taking shape and this was an adult who was afflicted with the robotic control of authority. I was to do what I was told in this nauseating fixture of societal resurrection. I painstakingly ate all of them. I took small portions at a time. How I did it I don't know but I was always a polite child who followed even the stupidest rules. With each bite I gathered all of my strength to keep them down. They disgusted me as I swallowed my first taste of the plague that had arrested the adults in the fabrication of an asinine reality. Will alone could not stop the peas from reaching the world in a volcanic fashion. I felt them sitting inside me like hundreds of tiny worms turning and revolting against my system. A civil war erupted in the cauldron of acids that was my stomach. An evil entity had invaded the sacred temple and was waging a violent display. There was a satanic organism in the church of God. With fury and rage God struck him down and I vomited all over the table. I learned a lot about these machines that had been programmed in authority. They seemed to have been so conditioned in formality as to remove the human elements of freedom that I was accustomed to at home. And this was my first encounter with the concept of reality that the grown-ups had so cleverly devised. How I felt about this substance of often-

ridiculous rules and regulations didn't really matter and it was nauseatingly apparent to me. What I had to say in regards to this force-fed vegetation of substantiality was as pointless as shoveling shit against the wind. I wasn't taken seriously. I was expected to do what I was told even when it was something that was not within my capabilities. And above all, as a child I learned that I was going to be assimilated into a system of submitting my will to the superiors of an automated protocol.

I did have some pleasant memories from Head Start. And this world that I found myself in wasn't entirely inane with the adult etiquette of peas. But unfortunately with me the negative episodes have often monopolized my mental energy more so than the good ones. I don't know how to explain this occurrence but it has plagued me in a holocaust of torment during many trying periods of my life. I know there were many wonders and miracles in my early youth. But my mind tends to clutter in a garbage truck of pessimistic energy if I am not careful in weighing both sides of the spectrum. And there have been a great deal of disappointments that come to characterize my life on earth. It has taken me many long years to learn to reinforce my ego with confident thought. Having work that allows me the opportunity to weave the tragedy and the joy into a meaningful arrangement has been a purpose that has boggled my mind. You are welcome to join me as I attempt to accentuate the positives in what has been a faithful crusade to restructure and rebuild *The Other Side of Sight*.

Many of my earliest memories of my parents are warm. They were very loving and thought the world of me. They gave me three younger brothers. Each of us are a year and a half apart except for the last who is eight years younger than me. In my earliest memories with my brothers I don't recall having to compete for the attention of my parents. Though there were occasions when I felt jealousy towards them as intrusions. There were a great many times when we got along and played together in a rhythmical joy of childhood. I have many pleasant memories of a peaceful harmony of toys and reverie that come to illustrate the exuberance of an innocent brotherhood of children. Those times with my brothers playing in the forest of our backyard were the magical wonders of a world that floated endlessly through the days of enchantment and fantasy. We were the youths of myth and belief that had been captured in every tale of the imagination that makes childhood the wonderful garden that it is. Those were the days of the *Jedi* and I have to say that the epic saga of *Star Wars* animated much of our childhood in grandeur. George Lucas gave my brothers and I a wonderful gift of an intergalactic valiance that was going to remain in our psyches for the rest of our lives.

I tend to overlook the brilliant orb that filled our hearts with the mythologies of the time as I was occasionally neutralized in mania. It never began as sibling rivalry. But I was hypersensitive at times in what was the chaos of my mind as the master of puppets pulled the strings of my madness. I experienced every sensation in extremes and

was often raw with the burning of a magnified glass against the sun. Lights were brighter, noises especially loud. There were times when it was difficult for me to be around my brothers because of the constant noise that plucked about the strings of a piercing Satan. They both seemed to deliberately torture me with annoying sounds. Sometimes it was as subtle as one of them pressing his lips together. Although it drove me crazy no one else seemed to notice it. Nevertheless, I had powerful antennas that tuned directly in on them. I often yelled at them to shut up, but they continued to taunt me with the violins of vehemence that hissed the music of lizards. They made sounds that only I could hear and my reality erupted in a rage of retarding reason. It drove me in a maniacal machine of my mind's grinding gears as they screeched in the spouting of sparks. There was sometimes something about the sounds that was seductive like the warm breath of a woman's whisper in my ear. The metals gently made the luscious lust of fire and I couldn't bear the thought. It stirred feelings in me that I hated in my own submission to the forces of a fondling tongue of touching musicians. On one occasion one of my brothers was making the slightest sound with his lips. The noise was almost imperceptible, but it found my ears and echoed through my mind like the bells of hell in a parade of vibrations. He was just sitting there moving his lips ever so slightly. I could see it out of the corner of my eye, which re-enforced the volume to an exceedingly difficult level to withstand. The more I tried to ignore it the more intense it became in the frenzy of a feeble child that howled in the stationary of space and

time. I could feel the impulses in my arms that rushed with the blood of my pulse. I wanted to pull my hair out in the raving barbarism of baldness. I wanted to scream until my vocal cords shattered the glass in the windows of my eyes. I became obsessed with the noise as if it were an extension of myself like a toe that was pounding with the pain of having been stubbed. My thoughts did not leave it alone and I felt betrayed by the wicked witch of perception as she cast upon me the torment of a tickled brain. The fingers that moved so feverishly as the itching of my senses against the soft tissue of my universe made creation a crumbling matter of mental mushrooms that stretched into the heavens. It was a moment trapped in the misery of an alluring repulsion where I was giving in to the licking of lizards that sought to sooth me in the swaying dance of their drums. I could have ripped my eyes out of their sockets. I could have taken a knife to my ear. I just wanted it to stop but was too paralyzed in frustration to even leave the room. "He is doing this on purpose!" I thought. There were occasions when I wasn't able handle it anymore. For some reason I didn't know enough to simply leave the room. I didn't feel that I should have had to. I walked across the room and punched my brother in the mouth giving him a bloody lip. My mother was furious with me. "What the hell are you doing? What the hell is wrong with you? Go to your room!" She screamed. (I spent a lot of time in my room growing up.) No one understood why I hit him. In my entire life my brothers were the only ones who caused this kind of disturbance in me. I was too young to understand it or know what it

meant about the imbalance that was so bruising in my brain. And it was going to be some time before anyone else picked up on it.

I know that my brothers were just being themselves but I was so extremely sensitive to outside stimuli that the slightest sensation echoed throughout my senses. I don't remember it being this way in the early stages of my childhood. This was something that I developed into as we grew aside each other. It was becoming apparent to everyone that I was quite different in the irrational of my own behavior. I never ate at the table with them because of this. Their chewing drove me nuts. I couldn't bear to listen to the noises they made. But I was the only one who could hear them. My parents never noticed the weird sounds. They didn't understand why I constantly told my brothers to shut up. I heard them making noises every time I was near them. It was a combination of hypersensitivity and obsessive thought patterns that were bizarre in my distressful reality of ravaged rational. The stresses of an extraordinarily sensitive perception of events often made my mind an inferno of neurological demons that sought to mock the innocence of my childhood.

I had no control for shutting out the noises any more than I had control over my occasional migraines. More then just occasionally though. Almost four times a week. Time and place didn't matter. There was nothing to do to prevent an attack. My teachers were made aware of my headaches and I was allowed to rest my head on my desk whenever one assaulted me. But most of the time I went home sick as a member of a world that marinated me in uselessness. The affliction

was in many ways a holy disorder bestowed upon me in the fire of a sublime pain. My childhood was a profound state of mental anguish that varied between the brilliance of mythological sunshine and the thrashing of diabolical hurricanes. By the third grade they were especially difficult to handle. During the second half of the school year the school began sending me home after half a day of class. The following year the school's strategy shifted. I was no longer allowed to go home, instead I was allowed to rest my head on my desk and do nothing for the remainder of the day. I found it excruciating to listen to the class during a migraine. Every sound became exaggerated and echoed. Every noise became a piercing, tormenting blare that shattered the glass onions of my internal design. Lying in a quiet dark room sometimes helped. That's where I immediately headed after school. But more often I headed for the bathroom and vomited first. I vomited a lot when I was young. Needless to say, my education as well as the development of my social skills suffered greatly because of this. It was a long time before I was able to develop an uninterrupted train of thought.

One thing that did happen as a result of the pain and suffering that I went through because of my migraines was the development of a strong emotional bond between my mother and myself. Almost synchronous in nature. She suffered with me everytime I had a headache. Not only was it my struggle, but it became her endeavor to find and research any possible means of relief. My mother went through a lot of difficulties because of doctors feeding her the wrong

information about how to care for me. It seemed that there were never any good doctors. This caused my mother a great deal of pain and an overall feeling of helplessness as she often watched me suffer in the horrendous tension of my fragile existence.

By the fifth grade my parents transferred me to a different school that turned out to be rather strict. On my first day of class my head felt as though the hands of God were crushing it in a maddening act of a chaotic universe. As I understood as a child God had a strange design that he was force feeding me. After school I stood in the parking lot crying. Several children from my class came up to me and asked me what was wrong. None of them knew about my migraines. It was difficult for me to explain. Not only was it difficult but it was humiliating. Here I was at the mercy of this incredibly vicious attack on my brain. Yet I looked like I was weak and no one really knew why. I can only imagine the thoughts that went through the minds of many of the students as they watched me breakdown for no apparent reason. I guess I was never really concerned about being humiliated. At least not until the day after. When having a migraine it doesn't matter if you are buck-naked in the middle of church. The pain supersedes the embarrassment. During the onslaught of an attack there is nothing else to think about but pain. I wasn't able to experience thought in the way that most people do. There was nothing to focus on but the suffering. During a migraine you may as well be at the bottom of the ocean in a tiny submarine. You see the world through a small portal. Your senses are still available, but you

filter them through the intense pressure of the ocean. As every second passes you feel them dragging through a pressurized tunnel such as a water hose. And you pray to God from the depths of an unusually fathomless pain that your mind does not implode. The healing touch of a supreme creator in my process of suffering was something that I longed for during my childhood. And I was one to pray for miracles.

About a week later I experienced another attack while in class. The nausea was overwhelming. I rushed to the front of the class and vomited into the basket. The nun was upset to say the least. I do not doubt it if the negative energy of her personality caused me the stress that initiated the migraine in the first place. Sometimes the stress of an atmosphere was all it took. And she was a cold bitch with a stern and strict personality. I was accustomed to and needed to be around people who were more relaxed and easy going. People who were more understanding. How can a person of religious convictions be such a wretch? She was a nun and a teacher. She was someone who was in a respected position. From someone who devoted their life to God and worked with children I expected a devout understanding. Instead I got an uncaring, insensitive witch. Are these the types of people that represent the Catholic Church? "What a wonderful and miraculous religion." I thought. She grabbed me by the arm. She didn't even give me a chance to leave the room by the power of my own two feet. With a mean spirited shove she cast me out of the class like an evil spirit who needed to be exercised. "Report to the office!" She growled as though I was to be ashamed for having been sick. She

was abusive to other students also. It was not isolated to me. She eventually lost a position that she originally had no right being in. I didn't adjust well to the new school and never was going to be able to make it an entire year in her class. I had difficulty with the stern atmosphere. My migraines occurred with more frequency and severity. I convinced my parents to return me to my old school.

Although my old school was more comfortable in respect to my teachers I wasn't popular among my classmates. It was also a Catholic school and the class size was very small and consisted mostly of girls. I was one of only three boys in the class and they and I didn't get along. I always ate alone and I began to develop an isolated social identity at an early age. During recess I paced the parking lot. I was very effeminate back then. I began to grow my hair long and was sometimes mistaken for a girl. It bothered me in that I thought that maybe the other kids in the class pushed me away because of it. But I hadn't reached puberty and at the time I never thought much about my sexuality. It never occurred to me that my long hair might confuse people about my gender. In a class made mostly of girls I wanted to be liked by them. I wanted to fit in. My logic was very strange growing up and I needed a psychologist to understand me. I think it was my parents who convinced me to get a haircut. I started to feel more like a boy and as other people started to treat my as such I felt better about myself. This always worried me throughout my life. The idea that I had to present myself in a certain way in order to receive common courtesy revealed to me many cruel

and shallow traits of the human being. Traits that I came to loath within myself.

It's no wonder that as I was growing up I came to realize that I was different, even slightly odd. More than that actually, I was bizarre. I was a young experimentalist. The migraines and my sensitive nature were shaping my youth and how I was perceived. My mother argued that the headaches were a result of the doctor using forceps to deliver me. She also speculated that I might have had something wrong with the chemistry of my brain. But of course she didn't have a degree so no one took her seriously. Whatever the case I continued to fall victim to them two to three times a week without any relief. The pain was unbearable. As when I transferred to the new school the migraines were often brought on by pressure. But there were also times that they struck without reason. The question of their origin was and still is a puzzle to me. The complexity of neurology and the intricacies of the human brain were never solvable within the scope of my intellect. I remember many times after hours of having a migraine all that I was able to do was close my eyes and focus on what seemed like snow in a television set. My thoughts would seize and all that I wanted was to shut myself off. There was an intensity of noise in my senses. When experiencing pain for such a long duration I came to focus more intently on certain things as distractions. At times I felt that I could almost step outside of the pain and view it as a repetitive insanity. The riddle of immaculate torture was in my attempt to disassociate myself from it. Prolonged suffering can be

abstracted into a pattern of mental phenomena. I still see auras and flowing light when I look into the dark. This sacred disorder taught me to do some unusual things with my mind and growing up it was at times an inspiration in thinking with abstract structures of thought. Agony can be an abundant resource for the creative mind. But at the time this resource transfigured the innocence of my childhood into a grueling dept of punishment and prisons that I had been born into. I learned too much of the hardships of losing my mind at too early an age. During the delicate years of my youth I became conditioned to seek out the meaning of life in the release of misery. While the other kids were dedicated in the games of growing I had a greater purpose that was compounded by strong religious symbolism.

My parents continued to take me to different doctors in search of a remedy. None of them helped. The doctors didn't really know what to do about my problem. We even traveled to Boston to see a specialist. I was hopeful to finally get some answers and some relief. When we arrived there we had to wait for what seemed like hours before we could get in to see the doctor. Finally, my parents and I made our way into his office. They explained my problem to him, which I am sure he had foreknowledge of. As I remember the only thing he said was; "Your son brings these headaches upon himself. If he doesn't learn to live with them he's not going to be able to make it in the world." That was it! That was what my parents and I drove all that way to hear. There I was, a child, suffering in extreme pain for a substantial part of my life and this was the best that this guy could

come up with. He was the Wizard of Oz with a medical degree! If anyone was going to be able to help me it was him. The delicate nature of my heart and every once of my faith were rested in the medical profession as being the scientists of God. Yet the "wisdom" derived from all of his diplomas denied me any comfort for my pain. This guy clearly had no idea what he was talking about. I most certainly was not bringing them upon myself. He never even discussed possible causes such as brain disorders. I'm sure that I had some neurological anomaly. I believe too that he was a neurologist, but he never discussed anything about what might have been happening in my brain during an attack. He didn't even make any speculations. He took one look at me and surmised the whole situation without any insight on my part. He didn't ask any questions. He looked at me as if my coming to see him was a burden on him. As if he just wanted to get rid of me. I still don't understand what his problem was. As far as I know he gave my parents and I no information about migraines or how they occur. All I remembered was what he said and how uncaring and insensitive people in the health profession actually were when they didn't have the answers. There was no need for his "Tell your son to deal with it!" attitude. My hopes of ever finding sanctuary from the demon that I called the migraine were shattered. Fortunately I didn't have to hope for much longer. Unknown to me at the time was that I was going to be granted relief through a natural process of growth. After I reached my mid-teens, as if by some kind of miracle, my headaches started to taper

off. I find that I seldom get them today, and when I do they are not of the same intensity. But the lessons of this immaculate pain were going to linger with a turbulent understanding of life.

The headaches alone made me unlike everyone else as I required special attention, but with them was a blaze of creative thought that I naturally came to express as my primary language in artistic form. I always had to draw something. In school all I did was doodle and I always excelled in my art classes. My teachers sometimes found my lack of interest in other subjects to be frustrating. My mother, who also has artistic talent, continually encouraged me to draw. My mother was at times a positive influence on me growing up. She was the first to recognize me as being gifted and soon everyone else did also. I gained the popularity among the community that we belonged to as being a prodigy. That was a fairly monumental status for me throughout my childhood and there was a lot of admiration from the people who knew of me as such. I had a knack for looking at the world through an artist's lens. It was a lens that I found adjustable and able to zoom in on inner workings of my personality. My technique was coarse in the process of development. But my imagination was a tribal village of medicine men who performed sacred ceremonies through the coordination of my eyes and my hands.

It may have been in the second grade when I first came to realize my talents. Not simply recognizing them as the projections of my imagination, but seeing them in relation to the world. Even at this age my art mirrored the components of my personality and the fathoms of

natural pain. Whether I liked it or not I had an identity of a profound constitution that was given to me in the crowning of birth. This individuality that made me both an abnormality of social disfigurement and a passionate explorer of the wild revealed itself to me in my talents. I had accumulated a large portfolio of artwork that I spent time working on in school. I remember that I hung all of my art on one wall in my bedroom. It was a large wall and no space was left unfilled. I took great pride in my art. I still have all of my artwork from my childhood. It rests in a big box in a closet at my parent's house. My emotional enthusiasm in creation was like a wild fire that engulfed me in desire. I learned quickly that I was special in comparison to other students who weren't as imaginative. I had gathered together a great portfolio. This was quite an accomplishment for me. Especially when I consider how young I was. I was driven like a mute who had no other means of expression. There were so many things that couldn't be said with words and I needed to capture all of them. There came a defining moment when I completed this portfolio. Hanging up on my wall were the masterpieces of an eight-year-old. I don't remember the following incident well; my mother relayed it to me some time ago. She said that she came into my room one day to find me atop my dresser. I was sitting there in my underwear and looking at the wall. It was a large dresser. I must have had to open the drawers to climb up it. I don't know what possessed me to do such a thing. As a child you do things unconsciously. Reaching for a higher summit, possibly for a

moment in which I could rise above the thunder of the violent storms of insanity that passed me without warning. Looking for a door there in the wall - a connection to something greater than myself. I cant imagine that I had struggled so hard to bring this unity of artistic expression together without having a concept of a higher power that had been guiding me to the top of the mountain. Upon seeing me my mother asked in curiosity, "Jon, what are you doing?" "I have to get ready for my career as an artist." I told her. Then and there I realized the unfolding of my life in creative expression. Not many children come to realize a destiny and throughout my life I was going to toss it aside only to find it throwing itself back in my face as a maddening height that I so early decided to climb. The symbol of my future was enough to fill me with the glory of my pursuits in childhood. My identity was with wings perched above the dresser of obstacles that I overcame. And my existence was so much more than the horrors of an organic hell.

My needs as an artist didn't stop with the need to create. I needed visual stimulation all the time. I was fascinated with perception. It was around the same time that I built this portfolio that I'd also spend hours in the bathroom staring at the floor. It was made up of white octagons and small blue squares. I used to stare at it until the blue squares floated above the floor and just hovered there. My focus became so intense that I'd forget about everything else but my field of vision. It was like being in a mystical world of purely concentrated perception. I was experimenting with an altered state of awareness.

Though I didn't realize it at the time I was inducing a self-hypnotic state. I even thought I had some kind of magical power to be able to change the physical world through concentration - even if it only worked on the bathroom floor. I later realized that it was a simple trick of the eye, similar to looking at a steriogram. Whether it was the strain of the migraines or my own curiosity to explore visual anomalies I set myself a standard for observing life as an oddity. This peculiarity of being grew into more profound levels as time brought me closer to the formulation of an accelerated consciousness and into an even stranger land of thinking.

The savage intelligence of my youth was encompassed by the misfortune of mood swings, which differentiated me from other children. They often left me even more isolated within the cyclone of misunderstanding that my mother had given birth to. My parents were not prepared for the complexity of psychological involvement that was included in the understanding and nurturing of a young artist. I was in every way an artist who suffered for his work even as a child who didn't understand the powers behind my creations. I was up like the heart of a sunrise dazzling the occupants of this world with an inner beauty that shown through to the core of my personality one-day. But just as easily I was furious like a wild animal savoring the mania of the moon the next day. No one could figure out what was wrong with me. When I think back I believe the mood swings were a result of the migraines. I was conditioned in the fluctuations of miraculous periods of salvation from the depths of a horrendous pain

to experience a great instability in the reality of my personality. Being a child this uncertainty made life an unfair battle that I was not equipped to deal with emotionally. The burdens of migraines had they not been so prevalent might have allowed me a childhood that had a stronger foothold in normality as I saw in the other children.

When I was about twelve this tornado of what was simplistically understood as a Jeckal and Hyde working of a satanic possession came to a boiling point that could no longer be ignored. I was hospitalized and diagnosed with clinical depression. I didn't agree with the diagnosis then and I don't agree with it now. I had more than depression flowing through my veins. I had a touch of mania that brought my mind into a blaze of fury. The drifting away into dementia that left me helpless during the attack of a migraine was something that touched me as if it were a ghost haunting the sacred ruins of my mind. Not knowing any better as a child when that specter struck me I lost control. I had some idea of what was going on, but couldn't articulate the problem. I was failing to dominate the demons of my behavior in response to outside stimuli as I was having violent outbursts all the time; more so than usual, as if I was fighting a great plague that had swept the countryside of my youth. This Black Death that had come to overpower me was my younger brother. He was the second born. At the time I had been on Ritalin and a few other drugs supposedly to help my migraines and misdiagnosed hyperactivity. Some of the drugs did wonders but were extremely addictive. But before being prescribed them I was warned that they might stunt my

growth. I think it was the Ritalin that caused this. It did start to stunt my growth. Or at least I could tell by the drastic difference between my brother and I. He grew tremendously before my eyes. I was not happy about this. Everywhere we went he was considered to be older than I was. When my father took us places he let people guess the eldest. Even in the family it seemed to me that he had more authority and my parents favored him. This was a great humiliation all throughout my life. And my parents forever burned it into my boyhood psyche. I always felt inferior as if I was the second born. There was no greater sign to me that I was a subordinate in the eyes of my parents. Both of them seemed to make this painfully clear in their approval of him while I spent most of my time in my room discovering a mirror of inadequacy. It wasn't necessarily because I had been sent to my room as much as it was that I was growing distant from my family. I eased into a situation in relation to the world where I was on the outside looking in. I was complex to a point of not being understood. My brother was a game of tic tack toe that was fun to play. I was a *Rubix Cube* that was capable of causing great frustration. Naturally my mother preferred a son who had an easy personality. Unfortunately even as a child as I began to develop I became too complicated for her to bother solving. So we lost touch. And I lost touch with myself. I could not concentrate on my own abilities and bring forth my talents. As far as I knew my talents didn't account for anything in an arrested development. I was having a hard time maturing as he gained added attention every day. My growth was

hindered and there was really nothing I could do about it but feel humiliation in having been surpassed. It wasn't just my parents who favored him as maturing faster than I. He had popularity. In school he had friends. Girls adored him. I grew to hate him in the fury of a developing inferiority complex. It wasn't fair to him and I should have exercised my own individuality, but the feelings that I had acquired were in the combustion of a circumstance that frustrated me in the anguish of standing still.

There isn't much of a story to tell about our altercations. Children fight and parents become furious. I can describe with great detail the violence and hatred that we were both capable of. But to rehash things like this doesn't do anyone any good. Nevertheless after repeated attacks by myself I found that I was being hospitalized. I had made my first enemy in life. And as doing such I was being banished from a family that I so vehemently imagined preferred it if I stayed in my room for the rest of my life. My parents were never good communicators in establishing strong bonds with me. I was always sent to the foreign frontiers of conversation to settle accounts as I lived a great deal within an atmosphere of spirits. The form of native thought always found me regressing into the womb of my mind until the concerns had been reconciled. But the unions of communication that solved the problems of situations were never established. At least not those unions that existed in human relations.

One union that was missing desperately from my life was with my father. He was not a big part of my life during my childhood and was

not there for me at this time. His presence was always felt, but he worked amazing hours to support the family. Also because of my fathers introverted nature he didn't know how to interact with us. It was my mother's job to raise us. My father was not a verbal man and he had difficulties in expressing himself. Without knowing what to do with me my mother made the decision to have me hospitalized. Unfortunately I still don't feel as though anyone ever had the ability to understand what was going on with me during this time in my life. I felt alone and abandoned and misunderstood. The pain of this far outlasted the pain of my occasional migraine. I wanted my mother in my life. I needed to be close to her. I needed her to understand me. And she didn't. No one did. And no one ever made an attempt to understand. The stresses of the situation were obvious to only myself. I learned early that I was alone on this planet. If my parents who were so close to the situation had no understanding of what was going on then what hope was there for the rest of the world to understand me? I was exiled to the wizardry of skeletons and serpents that were to come to be my family of aliens in the asylum of young minds. Minds that were exotic landscapes of distress and reckless abandon.

I must have stayed in the hospital for what seemed like a month. I wasn't given any medication and still fail to understand why not. In fact, I was taken off of all the medications that I was presently on. I don't remember much about the hospital stay other then that I was happy to be in an environment that was completely foreign to the one in which I fought with my brother. At least I felt that there were

people who were giving me special attention. Especially positive male role models, which I so desperately needed in my life. My mother came to visit me every day, which I was grateful for. I was a child who needed special attention. My parents could never afford the time for me, but at the hospital I was given that time.

I was so young and still didn't fully understand what was going on with me. Or at least I didn't know how to articulate the problem. The time I spent at the hospital I spent by myself in the company of my demons and in the games of psychology. I never really opened up to anyone, but there were a few of the adults that I felt comfortable hanging around with. From this early age it has always been difficult for me to express myself orally. I was a doer. I only knew how to show people what was wrong with me by acting out. Part of this I believe was due to my father's lack of verbal skills. He never communicated well with my brothers and myself. I have no recollection of holding a conversation with my father as a child. My mother was very verbal, but I don't recall her preparing me much for the concrete particles that made up the complexities of societal constructions. Children need to be talked to and I happened to miss out on a lot that life had to offer because I was not taught good communication skills. Of course my father was abused by his father who was a raging alcoholic. So he did not come from a situation where he really knew how to articulate with my brothers and myself. He spent his due amount of time in the riddle of pain. But his torture was not an immaculate touch of migraines. It was in the furious mind

of my grandfather who waited at the end of his life fearing the wrath of God.

When I returned home things went back to normal. I had reverted back into the womb of my mind until the concern had been reconciled. But I think the added attention that I received helped a great deal. And the time away really helped ease the tensions between my brother and myself, but it was not the cure to a learned behavior of aggressive tendencies. And it didn't relieve the seductive caress of a beautiful irrationality that my migraines had so gracefully granted me in creative thought. That was a gift that was too exalting for my then chaste mind. Though, there were psychological stresses for me as a child a lot of the behavioral problem has been in my mind due to a neurological disorder. The neurology of the migraines seems to have been what precipitated the aggressive form of psychological disturbances. I could research for years and practice the studies of psychology to an analytical death. But the brain and the mind effect one another in a synchronous orchestra. What you feed your brain in chemicals has a direct effect on the operation of your mind. I can write this book with a mind that is clever and resourceful. This book is a sea saw of thought and brain that come to grow upon each other with the aid of my medications. But given my age at the time of the hospitalization most children had the ability to deal with the same stresses in a more efficient manner then I was capable of. Something about my brain was not quite right and it was a sad misfortune that I was born with. I never asked to be challenged. I never did anything

that was deserving of my disability. I can only imagine the remnants of a former life carried over into this world. In Buddhist beliefs if a person commits suicide they will once again find that they are in another life that bears the same circumstances. They will have to repeat the tragedies of their existence over and over again until they finally find the strength to overcome. If Buddhist beliefs are a true indication of the perplexity of reality then my life was going to make me believe that I was in that cycle. The mood swings continued, but for the most part that touch of insanity had subsided and calmed in the mind of a child who was tired of being cast into the dancing phantoms of his room. I "got over" my inferiority that I felt because of my brother to a point of acceptance. The embrace of myself as I was at the time seemed to be one of a prolonged stability. The mythical charm of the hospital was an ongoing parade of attention by people who didn't even know me. I was worth the attention that I wasn't afforded at home. As much as it seemed like a punishment the hospital made me realize in a way that I was an individual that existed apart from my relation to my brother.

The combination of mood swings and migraines were making me unpredictable and I was receiving quite a bad reputation. No one understood me or my extreme sensitivity. Before the hospitalization the aggressive outbursts were not restricted to the home. I was very young and not much in control of the overwhelming weight of existence that I had to bear in my unconscious understanding of it. All I knew was that it attacked me furiously and without benevolence.

There was a God of wrath who looked down upon me and in the sorcery of impulse I breathed the forbidden fire of anger. I remember one time in class I picked up my desk and threw it across the room as I shouted obscenities. I don't quite remember why. I think I was mad at a fellow student and flinging my desk seemed like the thing to do. I don't remember much of the incident other than the lunch lady being shocked by my behavior. No one said anything or did anything to reprimand me. My fellow students didn't know what to make of me, and they kept their distance. It seemed that adults who were close relatives or friends of the family, those who knew my situation and how I suffered with the migraines, were more sympathetic to my struggles as a child. But it wasn't the acceptance of the adults that I needed. I didn't fit in with others my age. And because of the difficulties that I had interacting with them I never had much of an opportunity to make friends. I wasn't popular like my brother. I was the frustrations of a little and delicate life who walked the earth with eternity on his shoulders and bewilderment in his brain. I needed the interaction with my peers as a child. I wasn't as typical as the other students and my life was full of meaning that was too much for me to grasp. There was a matrix of purpose that was shoving itself down my throat. But all I wanted was to be a kid. For what should have been the sunshine of my life where my personality was in a crucial stage of development my migraines robbed me of an unwavering identity.

It wasn't until my parents moved and I was placed in a public school that things started to change. The move was a great transition for the entire family and a new beginning for myself. We were moving to a much nicer neighborhood and leaving the city behind for the most part. I wasn't too fond of the city to begin with. The suburbs seemed much more peaceful as did the people. But people can be the cryptic jigsaws of dark and deception in the sunshine of God's country. There was a stigma associated with the thick Italian roots of the town. Unlike the city that was filled with the anonymity of being in a crowd the town was a sophisticated art form of connections where everyone had a name. I was half-Italian on my father's side. But I seldom felt the blood of a suave demeanor in my veins, which my mother thinks of when I ask her to assess the Italian persona. I wasn't familiar with the character that was so imbedded in my Italian blood. I was an inhabitant of wild intellect and dramatic beliefs that bathed in a waterfall of imagination. The organization of an emerging personality of charm and charisma was going to come upon me for the first time without the catastrophic plight of an electrified brain. The migraines were tapering off and I was able to endure occasional ones that struck. In the relief of this profound anguish the religious significance that accompanied my suffering began to dissipate as I left behind the ruins of an ancient practice in my old school. There I was among the bleeding hearts of faith and forgiveness in a community of elders who prayed endlessly for the disadvantaged. Many of the faculty and teachers I came across in my

old school were truly genuine and devout believers of convictions that almost seemed to descend into the paranormal. To many of them the power of prayer was the greatest force in the universe. It was more powerful than gravity. The impending force of involving myself in the extremities of meaning that overflowed in my childhood was going to burst into the window of my mind from time to time. But for now I was left with a very hazy destination of manhood in the dynamics of this town that I needed to work out unconsciously. I was on my way towards realizing my adulthood identity in a town that was free for social exploration and social death.

I was about fourteen when I entered the new school. It was the first public school I had attended since Head Start. I was immediately accepted and made many friends, which was something very new to me. People didn't know me. They didn't know about my mood swings or my headaches. They didn't know that I had been hospitalized. I was treated as an equal. The girls no longer ignored me and everyone was eager to get to know me. A great curse had been lifted. My first impression of this school was a miracle of structure that I actually belonged in. I came into the light for the first time in my life as someone who was actually appealing and sociable. The witchcraft of ugliness that I practiced in the mirror of my room was blooming into the profile of an energetic and humorous young man. I was no longer the primitive child of a wild androgyny. I was verging on discovering just how interesting life actually was. I hallowed myself a place of interest in the incubator of majestic beauty that was

evolving before my eyes. There was something magical about girls that was unfolding before me. I always thought they were pretty but I started to develop a bond of affection in my mind that was irresistible. I hadn't quite crossed over into that pearly gate of self-satisfied bliss, but the finish line was within my sight. To see this coming was a wonder of celestial bodies dancing and swaying as time awaited me to bestow a present of surprise that was wrapped under a Christmas tree.

I actually met my first girlfriend at this school. The relationship only lasted a couple of days because of the great difference in the level of maturity between her and I. Of course I was still awaiting this mysterious gift that was only to make life much more complicated then I was able to imagine at the time. I remember once she kissed me on the cheek. I just blushed. I was much too shy and hadn't been experienced enough socially or weathered through time to even now how to proceed. I had a bit of an autistic personality that retreated into the folds and corners of being invisible when something made me uneasy. I hate to say that it is because of my mother's lack of affection for me when I was an infant. As she has told me I was seldom cradled in her arms in the early stages of my development. The doctors told her to leave me be because I cried so much and she didn't know how to handle me with my excessive need for attention. As a result I imagine I grew frigid. I don't know how else to explain it, but displays of affection were never natural for me. And this was to become a hindrance in establishing future relationships.

But the school along with the warm welcome I received gave me the confidence to try something that was normally not like me. I was reaching the zenith of daydreams where my imagination was about to project me to a very strange world of illusion. But I was also discovering my masculinity for the first time. That year, along with my brothers, I tried out for the town's football team and played starting defensive end and wide receiver. I found that in civilized competition with my brother I had the ability to prosper in social standings. He was in every way the Red Knight that I did battle with in my unconscious world of masculine psychology.

For a solid year I was able to enjoy my life and know what it was like to be kid like everyone else. The intensity of my neurology was soothed in the excitement of a brand new life. But this new life was about to unexpectedly step into the ungraceful shit pile of puberty. I had been anxiously anticipating the great gates of heaven in the arousal of my own imagination. But that was all I knew. Something was going to happen to change my life, but I didn't know the many facets of what it was about. My father never talked to me at all about what to expect and I discovered things on my own. I took what little I knew from what others my age had talked about and tried to put the pieces together. Masturbation came upon me like a Greek Goddess etching the eternal fever of the orgasm into the tissues of my brain. I knew nothing about it, but what I did know was that I enjoyed it more than creation. In fact, I enjoyed it at least three times a day. No one ever talked to me about it so I thought nothing of exploring my body

whenever I had the chance. This was an age in the joy of perversion. It's hard to explain. That goddess of sensual delight was caressing me and teasing me as she softly whispered in my ear twenty-four hours a day. I was given a special power to make love in the union of my imagination. My mind was never going to be the same. I had crossed over into the pearly gates of heaven to find a wicked garden of inflamed lust and alluring sirens that stranded me in my fantasies. I originally thanked God for bringing me into the pleasures of erotic illusions where a new dimension of entertainment had begun in the devious recesses of what was an innocent mind. I couldn't imagine that God didn't plan this for me as a natural process of my growth. But as time brought me closer to the truth of this garden and as it came to be a preoccupation of pure fantasy and self satisfaction I became certain that I was going straight to hell. I wasn't warned that this was going to happen. It was expected of me to know of the withdrawal that accompanied the lust of the goddess. And it was expected of me to know that there was a goddess of sexual appetite who awaited my growth so that she might seduce me into the forbidden amusement of the garden. I never expected the erogenous touch of my imagination to take me to the empty look of desire. And I sure as hell did not expect to be burdened with a voracious appetite.

Something very confusing was about to happen to me in the midst of my fantasy world. I realized that I was strongly attracted to my brother. He was not the one who I fought with but the one younger than he was. This was the first time that I realized that I was also

attracted to other boys. This in itself was damaging enough coming from a strong religious background and being in an environment where something like this was abnormal, but it was also an incestuous urge. And considering that he was a couple of years younger than I made it even worse. I never grasped the complexity of societal understanding at this age. But I had a pretty good idea that this was not something I could talk about. Just as masturbation was not something anyone discussed, my family was a closed door of understanding when it came to anything that had to do with sex. Sexual being in any form was kept in the closet and guarded by the Bible. In my father's house it was the sacred book of damnation. Even my mother who held close the principles of Christ had a great deal of the Old Testament in her. Anything of a homosexual nature was scoffed at in my house. Even as a child when I professed my love of Elton John's music my mother thought me odd because he was gay. Now I was finding out what it meant to be on the other side with those feelings. They were to be repressed as the shadow of my personality. With that magical present I had grown into a position of shame had I dared to be open. At the time I didn't know why I had these feelings. They were overwhelmingly strong. Unlike the attraction to the girls at school I lived with my brother every day. I alienated him by being aggressive and picking on him, as older brothers tend to do. Though secretly I harbored feelings that created a great shame in what I thought was going to be my first step on the moon of masculinity in puberty. 'Why is he doing this to me?' I

often thought to myself. Just being around him at times excited me against my will. And I had a very strong will. Of course there was no one that I could go to in order to understand these feelings. This was the late eighties and the world was just beginning its march to fight for the rights of Gays and Lesbians. As I have learned growing up in my own experience the personality consists of both feminine and masculine traits. Bisexuality is embedded in the dynamics of the mind. Some people have a stronger tendency towards one or the other. But my tendencies went in every direction. Even in the direction of my brother who was still young. Within that wicked garden of eroticism he had been forbidden only to my imagination. And even in my mind I cursed him for the shame of my feelings. This was a surprise that I had not expected to be under that Christmas tree when I awaited the gates of puberty. I was caught in a quandary of what to do with this strange identity of insatiable sexual appetite that I haphazardly stumbled upon. Repressing something like this only worked for so long and it wasn't healthy. But I had no where else to go. I later came to believe that this was not as bad as the environment that wallowed in the ridicule of damnation and forced me into the withdrawal of deep insecurity. This was something that was natural to my psychological makeup. To be ashamed of something like this is ridiculous. That was a part of my life that I had little control over. I never made a conscious decision to feel for anyone. The ability to be open without the fear of prejudice in learning to make sense of inescapable feelings that are deemed immoral or wrong is vital in the

understanding of those feelings. An individual who is forced to repress because of environment is going to lose ground in their mental health. I was that individual. Why was I the one who had such strange desires? I didn't know what a child molester was at the time but people later came to suspect a potential. I often felt strongly to act on these feelings that I had for my brother, but never imagined it was to make me a monster. My friends were not like this. Nor were my brothers. I went from the innocence of childhood into a land mine of social complexity. This was not what I wanted as I so eagerly made my way to the finish line. I thought he had vanished into the sunset of existence with the relief of my migraines, but that God of wrath never left my side. He was looking down upon me again as he made it his work to have his amusement with me. There had to be a God somewhere who wasn't such a brutal comedian.

My schooling suffered greatly because of this. I grew distant from the friends that I had made my first year and started to feel very insecure about myself and where I belonged. In school I was becoming an easterner in my introversion. I had a hard time masking my awkwardness as I appeared socially. There was nothing wrong with my appearance and girls still adored me, but I couldn't find interest in anything but my confusion. Girls were very much alien life forms that came from a beautiful planet that I had no business visiting. Not that I didn't think about it, but exploring thought and exploring actual physical sensations with another person were worlds apart. I was raised in a house where sex was only approved of in the

secrecy of the imagination. As far as my parents were concerned it didn't exist. And they didn't have sexual education in school. Sex was not a natural avenue of exploration that I felt comfortable with. The affection of girls made me even more self-conscious of my inexperience in a frigid retraction of my personality. My father decided to leave me on my own and it caused a great insecurity in my understanding of myself, which disrupted my learning process. I thought I had put away the witchcraft of ugliness forever, but in the year following puberty I returned to the bizarre practice. But this time it wasn't the ugliness of an untamed character. It was the ugliness of stupidity that was going to carry me into the dungeon of high school.

The final advancement of societal resurrection was found in the dingy halls of an institute that breaded hatred. I was among the blind youths in the beginnings of puberty to walk the corridors aimlessly in this melting pot of dangerous personalities. The Italians dominated the school and were affectionately referred to as Guidos. Then there were the Hicks. If you weren't one or the other you were an outsider in a land of confusion. You were a commoner of inanimate characteristics. The sad promotion of personality took place in high school. Occasionally an individual etched themselves a place of popularity as being unique to themselves. But it had to be someone of strong character who wasn't afraid to step away from the crowd. I was too peculiar and passive among peers in my awkwardness of puberty to stand apart in confidence on my own. And differences were shunned and mocked. The Guidos kept a flashy image of

masculinity while their female counterparts bathed their heads in hair spray. The Hicks were openly potheads and they dressed the part of people who planned to work in factories for the rest of their lives. It was very unfortunate that I attended a school of such challenged diversity. This was going to be my model of the world for the next four years. I was very much an individual in my creative mind, but minds don't count for anything in high school. As far as inserting into the slot of what was cool I was a geek in every possible way. And all that was important to anyone was how popular a person was. I didn't have this kind of pressure in grade school. I was a sensitive young artist among the emulation of wise guys and burnouts. I wasn't one or the other of the more popular types of personalities in school. All I wanted was to belong, but unfolding the deep introversion that I had developed into was a difficult task. Fitting in was a question of surviving. My first year at the school was a misery. I had lost all contact with the people I knew from my old school and was unable to make new friends. Lunchtime was like undergoing root canal surgery. This was the period where everyone got together. I was always alone and it showed like a giant neon sign. I didn't handle it well and I wasn't able to adjust. I remember in my biology class I often doodled on my notebook. For some reason I was always drawing men in action poses. I loved the male form. One student picked up on this and soon I became known as the kid who was obsessed with male bodies. So were Da Vinci and other great artist. I don't see how it made me such a freak. Yet that was how it was

interpreted. I never caught a break my first year at this peer persecution factory. Whenever I had free time I found a place somewhere in the school where I could sleep. I found quite a few places away from the crowd during lunch. I felt young for my age and I was still making sense of the sexual being that touched the tissues of my brain. Just getting through the day without being harassed or beaten up was my top priority. I don't understand how kids are supposed to utilize their minds in what should be a place of higher education when all it really involves is the pressures of a hostile environment where the thing you are taught most is to watch your back. That was the main lesson that I learned in my first year of high school. For no reason other than me being meek. I made most of the other geeks in school look popular. At least they were able to find each other and create social circles. I wasn't even able to fit in with them. My grades reflected my inability to adjust and my desire to learn was not as strong as my desire to retreat into the fantasy of an erotic playground. I didn't bother to attend the last quarter of school. I was only prolonging an undue agony if I did.

During this time I was very distant from my parents and my brothers. Arguments and fights were common place. My parents never offered me a structured environment that was conducive to my creative mind. The sexual suppression aside our house was as loose as the wind on the wings of a bird. They never devised a constructive pattern of discipline that established necessary bonds of communication, which were imperative in dealing with my behavioral

characteristics. A dialogue was never secured in understanding what was going on with me and why. For many long years I never knew my parents as they certainly did not know me. As the first born I imagined I was very much an experiment. It seemed to me to be one in a raw venture through an unconscious life. It was one that brought me closer to the wilderness of human relations and to the uncharted territory of my own primitive mind. I came to understand that my parent's had a great deal of frustrations with me that they didn't have with my brothers. I shared the same frustrations with them, but the difference being that I could be a hell raiser. But as I felt at the time they were the adults and it was their responsibility to know what was going on with me by actually talking to me. It wasn't within their ability to know how to interact with me and it certainly was not within mine to know how to interact with them. We had untamed relationships with one another that were illustrative of a frustrating age. The discourse that did establish between my parents and myself was often one of anger and disappointment. Of course I knew that I had to be punished every time I got upset, even when someone else was aggravating me. I wasn't supposed to get upset and it was often easy to bring me to a state of disruption. My father was always a ball buster and he had fun with this flaw in my character as he antagonized as if he was one of my classmates. He was no maturer than I was and I was only fifteen when I was having conflicts with him. He let himself become seduced by the tides of moods and he took pleasure in having his fun with me and then punished me for it. He never

concerned himself in establishing a bond between us when I was young. I was someone that he had the unfortunate responsibility of actually raising and he didn't have a working knowledge of how a father and son should relate to each other. I don't look back on this part of my life often. The awkwardness of puberty and the growing pains that I experienced because of it were not something that I enjoyed. My grandfather, (My mother's father) took me under his wing during this time in my life and did what my father couldn't do. He talked to me. It was strange and unusual having a male adult that talked to me. It really tested my attention and was the beginning of a lasting bond of both intellectual intercourse and heartfelt sentiment. I often went over my grandfathers. At first I just listened. I had a strange feeling that he came into my life for a reason.

I had some difficult times as a teenager. Always fighting with someone. There were a couple of fights with my brother too. The sibling rivalry was reborn during this time. I didn't belong with my family in the forest of my lost youth. I only belonged in the heinous fascination of my room where fantasy and reality formed a union that began to touch deep ripples in the foundation of my island. That alien being that was my adolescent existence lived among the life forms of strangers who spoke a language of gibberish. I detested them for my exile to the planets of volatile atmospheres where I had to learn to survive in the outer reaches of an uncontrolled imagination without the bonds of a cohesive verbal dialogue. My family never learned to speak the language of the aliens that I was becoming so fluent in. The

miscommunications and misunderstandings of worlds that did not parallel one another resulted in the combustion of frustration as I continued to breathe the fire of anger periodically. The sorcery of impulse was a madness bequeathed to me by the ever so confounding God of wrath. His minions were the torments of a vile irrationality that I dealt with in an unconscious understanding and inability to think things through. The anguish of misunderstood communication was reinforced by the dragon of disappointment. Most of the time I was fine and this mythical beast was not an emerging part of my personality. I was calm and relaxed. But under certain stresses of sour interchange I had the potential of losing my temper in a whirlwind of irrational thought. I was prone to the animal of wild behavior in making my shadow known to compensate for a defective thought process that was the outcome of my inherent neurology.

My grandfather was a Godsend. He understood clearly that I wasn't the product of a demonic possession. I had the potential to be just like everyone else. But even more than that I had the ability to rise above everyone else. My grandfather was going to be the first to explore my possibilities. He told me that there was a defining moment where he understood that I needed special attention. Special attention simply meant someone who talked to me. He saw me have an outburst during a family event. I did not become violent but was visibly angry. He said to me, "I saw you that day as you had an outburst and thought to myself that this child has something wrong with him. It is as if he is missing an arm or a leg. That was the day

that I decided to take you in." My grandfather became my primary teacher in life. *Little Big Man* with Dustin Hoffman was always my favorite movie, but with the advent of this new relationship it took on a greater meaning. My grandfather was a mentor of endless wisdom and unconditional love. He was the first adult role model to take a special interest in my development. It was a shining example of a male bonding between the master and his student that is quintessential in the landscape of masculine psychology. My grandfather befriending me at this age gave me the security that I was always going to have someone to turn to in times of trouble. Life was still going to shower me with the chaos of my often manic existence. But the bond between my grandfather and myself was going to endure through the bizarre and often reckless probing of my personal journey. Of course I had my mother who always loved me. But we often misunderstood each other and had a love hate relationship of aliens with confusing dialect. I needed the guidance of a male figure. Looking back on this I truly believe my grandfather gave me something incredible in life that my parents were not capable of. He often stretched my mind with stories of World War II and then took me into the future where money is obsolete. He introduced me to the computer and began to strengthen my mind. He gave me rational thought. He pushed me to think things through with reason. Rationalism was a mother ship of brilliant lights and hypnotic sounds. My grandfather was the first to abduct me and acquaint me with this strenuous language that I had to master. In the undertow of my

unconscious mind my savage intelligence was closing in on the seduction of absurdity. This was eventually going to have to be rationalized. But for now I was on a path of belonging.

Despite the troubles I had during my first year at high school I was somehow able to adjust with my grandfathers help. The next year was very different. I had my license and was old enough to operate heavy machinery. That was a big step in my life and a freedom of immeasurable proportions. Suddenly I was given the gift of flight. Of course I didn't own a car and my parents were too paranoid to let me borrow theirs. I was tantalized by the power of independence in dreaming of the open road but my parents made it certain that I never got that far. I had my first taste of adulthood in my wallet and that's where it was going to stay. I wasn't too thrilled about spending more time in the demonology of my room. There was a world out there and I had grown out of the clumsy mess of monastic eroticism. I was becoming familiar with myself in my adjustment to a sexual being that had at first overwhelmed me in peculiarity. I was confident in my bond with my grandfather and in myself. One of my brothers started high school that year. He was the one that I often fought with. But by this time I had adjusted fairly well in a common sense that formed my new religion. We began to slowly develop a friendship. After hearing about JV football tryouts we both showed up. Though we were in the midst of getting along the competition between the two of us did not die. I only joined the team to emasculate him in competition. He had developed to become rather large in build and

was much stronger than I. But he was not equipped with the belligerent strength of fighting horrendous pain. I tried out for the position of quarterback and made the cut. He ended up as the center. But I think he tried out for a wide receiver.

This isn't really the most interesting part of my life. But being in high school it was imperative that I find a way to build a name for myself that was far removed from the kid whom was obsessed with male bodies. I was the greatest geek on the planet and a manifestation of alien life. But now I had won the position of a leader. Little did they know where I was eventually headed. But in the meantime I was going to prove to myself and to them that I was capable of a status in this dingy microcosm of society. We practiced for about two to three weeks but after all of our hard work we only ended up having one game. The head coach of the varsity team pulled the plug on the whole thing. I forget his reasons for doing so, but the team was very upset about his decision. Plus this was the first year that there was a JV team so none of it was set in stone. We ended up winning the game and it was enough to get my name heard on the loud speaker during homeroom. This was like a voice from heaven granting me the nobility of knighthood. This was the impassioned gift of gods that had been overcome in the honor of my contribution to this miniature world. I remember my cousin came up to me after homeroom. He was very popular and admired by everyone. Before his back injury he played football for the town and always won the MVP. He patted me on the back and said, "Now you're a big shot!" With that said I knew

I had accomplished something in my attempt to fit in with this aura of masculinity that permeated throughout the halls. I was no longer the alien of a sexually confused planet that reveled in the gaseous exposures of illusion. I was the self-assurance of my own ability to succeed.

The game itself is hard to describe in terms that the spectator can understand as never having clashed in an arena of pure adrenaline. Everyone has been a witness to the opposing forces on a gridiron that is structured in the offensive and defensive strategies of civilized warfare. The rush that accompanies being inside of this thinking thing of savage precision is glorified in grandeur. One of the great things about America is its Romanesque allegiance to organized sports. The sport of my fancy had evolved through the bridges of time to the ultimate culmination of a perfected gladiatorial combat. Football is the remnants of an ancient culture that drowned the world in domination. It has always been in my mind that America's greatest spectacle in the development of the gladiator with a civilized union was a well organized and often under appreciated intellectual craft of aggression. Anyone who is a diehard football fan knows that the game is so much more than the grunts of war that characterize the sport in a domination of sheer strength. You couldn't play football if you didn't have a working knowledge about the chess match of formations that are orchestrated in the masterminds of governmental strategists. I had a popular role of omnipotence in the early stages of what was still a microcosmic battlefield. In my mind football has

always been the ultimate artistic expression of a sublime savageness that swallowed the senses in an awareness that was echoing in a seductive fear. There was a continuing preparation that permeated throughout the course of battle to face the disintegration of defenses that held formations together. The tragedies of war were always capable of exploding in my face. Football was the violent fury of mankind in a carefully and elaborately controlled environment of craft. I was the leader of a group of kids that were new to the game. They looked to me for direction and counted on my own confidence in knowing what the hell I was doing. Sometimes I really didn't, but I was able to pull it off just the same. I never let them see my own uncertainty in our ability to win. I was the gatekeeper of the grand design and I knew that I had at least the illusion of control. Sometimes in life your actual abilities to succeed are only as good as the caliber of your attitude. People don't care for talent in an individual as much as they desire personality. This was a new experience that I had never known in a social situation. My commands set the flow of rivers and actions. I found that I was taking control of the surroundings and gaining the confidence of my team. Which was something I normally didn't do among my peers. I was in a position of importance for the first time and I was exploring the potential to actually put forth in motion the ability to make things happen. Not just to make things happen, but to see them like the pieces on a chessboard building a strategy to conquer and defeat. My coach gave me the plays but I was the one who fulfilled the art of war.

Unlike my barren roaming through the halls of school when I was on the field I was a sculptor of an intensity that fired in accuracy. I found a talent that had been concealed in the outer limits of my own belief in myself.

The desire to one better my brother awoke a part of myself that had been crawling in the insecurity of a useless life. The residue of my childhood experiences with him and the continuing after math of those encounters never left the scenery of my competitive nature. And I can't say that my grandfather wasn't helpful to my self-esteem. The funny thing about my hunger to control the ball and master the game was that I could never complete a pass. I could throw far enough, but my arm was wild. That didn't seem to be of importance to the coach and its something that has never been important in life. What was important was the animation of my spirit and my drive in mastering what were mostly running formations. I had a very determined presence that was not going to surrender to rejection. And I had an ability to put my mind to anything I desired, even if it was not something that I was particularly skilled at. I had the ability to be a chameleon in the many hidden talents of my personality was I to choose to believe in myself. But I never again found myself in a situation in society that equaled my position as quarterback for this team.

I suppose the experience was a highpoint for me. I learned that I did have the potential to matter as I related to society if I wished to harness my talents. But being young thoughts like that are not

relevant. The importance of life is wrapped in the moment. There was nothing more meaningful than what we had been practicing for. And during the game I was a fallen power line of ecstatic energy. My father and grandfather were both there to watch my brother and I play. They captured the entire game on my grandfather's video camera. There was one play on third down where I was given the call for a quarterback sneak by my coach. We got to the line of scrimmage and I started the count. The ball was snapped and I caught the defense off guard. I ended up running for about ten yards before being dragged down by a defensive linebacker. I had always dreamed of carrying the ball when I played for my previous team a few years earlier. I was so excited that after the play I went to my father on the sideline and asked him if he had caught it on tape. I could see right away how proud he was of me. I never knew my father to take pride in me.

I know it's not a story of success and fame. I know it wasn't the Superbowl and I realize I didn't score a touchdown. But to me it was a great accomplishment. After all the years of social setbacks and other obstacles that I went through because of my moods and illness I finally felt like I was somebody as I related to my peers. And I reached my father on a level that he could understand. My grandfather's efforts in me had paid off. I had finally gained my father's approval. I was becoming the image of a man in the belief of my own abilities.

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class that year and impressed many people with my artistic talent. Some of the upper classman that delved in what was the very beginning of an alternative scene began to notice me. I had a passionate side that I had been hiding away in the closet of my childhood. Many of them had their own flare for a poetic stance in the foothold of their future. They were the calling that might have exploded my mind in the creativity of stimulating associations, but I was still an adolescent in their eyes. Nevertheless I was starting to make a name for myself. I was developing a positive self-image and the ugliness of puberty had vanished. People knew me, and they genuinely liked me. I had come out of my shell to find that I was no longer an alien life form of a hermetic tragedy. My god, I actually belonged on earth. That feeling protected me in what suddenly became a walking womb. I had no idea how long it was going to last, but I was going to live for every second while it did. The spur of my creativity in composition was tantalized by the teacher from my drawing class. She was very artsy and attractive. The type of teacher that every student fantasizes about as soon as they get home from school. For many of us she was our daydream of being ushered into manhood. Not only that, but also she was an all around good teacher that inspired all of us to be expressive. Just being in her class made me want to develop talents that had been domesticating a culture in the recesses of my mind. I started to work on a portfolio and began thinking about college. It was not quite as large as the one I had from childhood, but the quality was that much better. I did a self-portrait,

which to this day I still believe is the best drawing of myself that I have ever done. I was very much in tune with my self at the time and in the beginnings of a clear voyage. I loved her class and she had me thinking about my future for the first time. The school did not have a big emphasis on artistic studies but she compensated for that. And she not only taught us about art, but she also took an interest in our social lives. All of the students thought the world of her. I remember the next year the first thing I did was go to her class to say hello. I was upset to find that she moved on to another school to teach. I often wonder how the direction with my education and life might have proceeded had she stayed at the high school allowing me to study under her. I imagine my life might have taken quite a different course. It is surprising to me sometimes the positive impact that people can have on me. I didn't realize how much of a positive influence she did have on me until I found the next year that she was gone. Having someone to guide my creativity to a higher level was far greater than executing plays for my coach. But I needed to be inspired to create. In the meantime I was also inspired to stick my tongue in the electrical socket of trouble.

In my first explorations of adult life during my sophomore year not only did I run before I learned how to walk, but also I thought before I learned how to see. The clear voyage into the future was paralleled with an eagerness to have as much fun with life as I possible could. And so every weekend there was a large group of us that went out to drink. None of us had access to a car so we walked

the streets with no where to go. But more often we went to this Chinese restaurant called China Bright. Blind to age they served us alcohol. We called ourselves the China Bright Posse. But not everyone exhibited respect where respect should have been shown. This ruined it for the rest of us or at least for me. There wasn't much maturity among the people in our group. There was always a lot of shouting going on. Food fights were common. We regularly left a mess in our wake. Once one of us clogged the sink in the men's room and flooded the bathroom floor. We usually had the restaurant to ourselves because people often left after the China Bright Posse settled in. I remember one time when a friend of my parents came in to eat as we were causing chaos. I was so embarrassed by my friends. She noticed me right away and with surprise in her voice said, "Hi Jon, how are you doing?" "I'm doing fine. How are you?" I replied. She seemed glad to see me. "Tell your parents I said Hello." She said as she proceeded to wait for her order. I tried to explain to my friends to calm down because I knew this lady that had just walked in as a friend of my family. They didn't really care. Constant jokes and mockeries of the accents of the waitresses and the owners filled the air. I could not believe that they were doing this to me. The China Bright Posse had little respect for anyone. After awhile the owners got sick of us and stopped serving us alcohol. To us it was the end of an era. But to the owners of China Bright it was the reclamation of their business. Unfortunately it was an era that was proceeded by a growing chaos of more disgraceful behavior.

Members of the China Bright Posse were presented with goofy nicknames. If someone didn't have a nickname it was because they weren't an interesting enough character. To be awarded a label was to be accepted into the group. It was a right of passage. There was Lancelot Link. He was named after a monkey from a television show that was on *Comedy Central* at the time. I still don't know why they called him this, but it was catchy. Then there was Melon Head, which was short for Thorton P. Melon. Thorton P. Melon was a character played by Rodney Dangerfield in some movie that I don't remember. He was called this not because he resembled Rodny Dangerfield, but because his head was out of proportion with his body. Melon Head became violent with anyone who called him this to his face. We all learned to refer to him as Melon Head behind his back. It really caught on. The entire school knew of him by his new alias. In addition he was sometimes called Dirt Bag because he always looked like he needed a bath. Pudgy Pumpernickel was a tad overweight. No one called him P.P. to his face either. Then there was the Lama. He was a goofy character. Satan was also known as Red because of his long red hair. But some of us called him Flamer and or Mask after the character from the movie *Mask*. The character from Mask had red hair also and they both shared the same complexion. Red was not an attractive fellow. I don't know how he managed later on in life to get involved with the woman that he did. Fingers had once jammed his hand in a car door thus his new title. It had nothing to do with his ability to pleasure woman, though that was what all the woman

thought. And there was Richard Simmons. They joked about him being gay but it was nothing more than a joke as far as I knew. There was a funny story about him humping the bushes in his front yard though. There was also the *Gerber Baby* who we more than often called Julio. My brother's name was Jesus Jones as he had long hair and reminded people of Christ. There were other nicknames, but none of them were as colorful as the ones mentioned.

I received a nickname that projected me into the cartoon universe where my grip on reality was drowned in the amusement of myself. I was the colorful creation of my own comedy, and I was Beefy Jones of the Sausage Making Posse. I used to wear a Boston Bruins jacket with a large "B" on it. Pudgy Pumpernickel was drunk one night and in character as a homosexual as he asked me what the B stood for and I just said, "Beefy" off of the top of my head. The name stuck like a magnet on the refrigerator of my own feeble-mindedness. A friend added Jones and later lengthened it to the Sausage Making Posse. I don't know where any of that came from. But from then on no one at school ever referred to me as Jon again. Jon was a person whom I left behind in the all too solemn and sober room of reality. I was going to rediscover him later in life, but for now Beefy Jones of the Sausage Making Posse became an identity that was far removed from the roots of any kind of sense and meaning that my life may have had. And I was thrilled with the foolish escape to the moon of half-wits. It was like having an alter ego that allowed me to forget the pain of life and enjoy the archetype of the trickster. As Beefy Jones I had a power to

be and do whatever I wanted with a loose foothold on consequences. I had an amazing status that filled my head with a ridiculous humor. All I ever did was laugh and find amusement at other people's expenses. These happened to be people that once reveled in the amusement of my own expense. In the omnipotence of a brilliant humor they were now on the receiving end. I discovered a great extroversion in my personality that was incomprehensible to the fear of embarrassment. My outrageously wild behavior was true to the genius of the jester. People thought I was stoned twenty four hours a day. I hadn't yet blasted off towards that exotic planet of mysterious experimentation. But in the meantime I was my biggest fan and as I walked through the halls at school people that I didn't know shouted out "Beefy." People I didn't know said hi to me and suddenly I found a place in the crowd as a comic genius. I never stopped to think that it referred to my sexuality. It was always a joke. People sometimes asked me why they called me Beefy expecting me to tell them that I was well hung. I just told them about Pudgy Pumpernickel and the night that we were all hanging out when Pudgy came on to me. And everyone had a great big laugh as if I was the master of a comedy that paralleled Robin Williams. I accelerated to the outer limits of my own parody and left my common sense in the reality of the sober. I just took off on it and never stopped as if an *Acme Rocket* was propelling me. I never took anything seriously and everyone was a cartoon character as far as I was concerned. They were literally out of a comic book and I couldn't comprehend that the world consisted of

any form of serious attributes. The somber realities that shrouded everyone's life were masked in the entertainment of the meaningless absurdities of life. This tragically ridiculous nature carried with it a comic intelligence that ridiculed the very substances of life that brought purpose to others. As I look back on this time in my life and the fiber of humor that I once knew as my primary mentality I realize that my mania was not isolated to the beauty and aggression of irrationality. There was a divine structure of comedic thought that blazed in the face of existence. It was of such a force that it was snowballing me blindly into the dangers of adult life where things really were not that funny. The catastrophe of laughing to a violent death was a frightening possibility that I had no concept of.

With the new found amusement in myself and the fame that it brought to me, it was just a matter of time before I was introduced to drugs. It's hard to say what made me decide to do drugs in the first place. I was never pressured to do them. I think that there were multiple reasons. One was that because I was prone to depression I was more open to altering my mood. Another reason was curiosity. I had been born with an experimental mind. Throughout my childhood I had been subjected to many different medical and psychological testing, including hypnosis. I was raised to investigate myself. My mind was always an unusual construction that had been explored by many means. Also I imagine that I inherited a tendency towards abusing substances because of my grandfather who drank and my father who experimented with everything. Though in the early stages

of abuse I didn't understand the addictive and dangerous aspects of using drugs. And I was not originally as interested in self-exploration as I was in having fun. I knew what it felt like to drink and I was a glorious drunk filled with splendor and the nectar of gods. I wanted to know what it felt like to try something different and I was aware that other drugs had hallucinatory qualities, which excited my imagination. I wanted to experiment with anything I could get my hands on. From the shortsighted perspective of a teenager I saw drugs as a form of entertainment. My artwork and my education took a back seat and so did every other facet of life. The cartoon universe of comedic being was about to reunite with the serious mind that held me hostage in the great sea of the migraine.

The turn for the bizarre was a strike of lightning that grounded me in the numinous high of inhalants. It was at this juncture that my religion of common sense truly dissipated in the compressed air of an energy field of consciousness. What need did I have for the numeric equations of simple arithmetic that the rest of the world had been polished in understanding? I was the astronaut of interstellar dust in an ultimate exhilaration of pure thought. Unlike alcohol, inhalants for me were hallucinogenic. I used to use what is called Freon. Used for refrigeration, its effects are very similar to nitrous oxide. It's also a seriously dangerous drug that can cause brain damage and death. It cuts off oxygen to the brain. I don't suggest that anyone try Freon or any drug. My personal experiences with substances have been varied to include the entire spectrum that is associated with them. Just like

any other scale it has a highpoint and a low point. Both extremes are quite capable of causing madness and death in their many flavored forms. This particular drug has an intense high that only lasts a few minutes. I used it for hours on end. It sometimes knocked me unconscious for a minute or so. I remember that every sound I heard would hiccup. It was very strange. And I saw colors. They were organized into a pulsating pattern of pure energy. Time seemed to be in a loop or repetition. Sometimes I'd lose site of the external world. Without sensory information from the outside environment my mind picked up the slack and created one for me. This new realm was very abstract in a theoretical language of nonsense. It was as if I existed only in the theory of a pure irrationality that I immediately recognized as home. The drug is a potent disassociative, but I was already equipped with an ability to abstract myself under certain conditions. This made the high the intense departure into an energy field of a semi-conscious state where I breathed the lustrous air of improbability. I was the only one I knew who dressed in a cape of super powers that vanished completely from the physical world.

I fell in love with this drug from the first caress of its kiss. The high was extremely addictive and unquenchable. I couldn't take just one hit of this exhilarate supposal of a purely notional validity. I had a foreknowledge of insanity encompassed in the riddles of pain, but now that riddle was igniting in the supernatural pleasures of preposterous ideation. I had to have this with me all the time as a wide-open extension of my reality. This was an escapist drug and I

found myself questioning the authenticity of the world I was escaping from. Nothing in my life up to that point compared with the high and in it was also the intertwining of a humor that combusted in an outrageous wave of nonsense. My life stepped into the psyches of animals and continued reverting into the souls of amebas. People might ask if that is actually possible. To that I can say that it is certainly imaginable. I crossed over into surrealism as if it had been a philosophy that was awaiting me in the breaking down of the human brain into its primary origin. I was alternating between two very different worlds as I purified the liquid in distinguishing between the mind and matter of my life. The appearance of one being a concrete structure that was swimming in the meaning and purpose of everything it contained. The other as being so removed in a violent contrast it was a nonsensical haze of intelligence abstracted to coincide with that place in the universe that gave birth to its creation. In the naivete of my youth the presence of this exalting mind was still conditioned by my adolescent understanding of it. The drug was a mystery that I spent much of my life wondering about in the aftermath of the brain cells that it killed. The drug contained a riddle that my then very modest verbal intellect could not answer as the master of the absurd continued rolling over in laughter at the reason I kept visiting him. The riddle itself was a mystery of cosmic proportions. There was a question, but it was wrapped in the question of what it was. I remember one occasion when I did Freon. Something of the experience came back with me as my friend told me of my behavior

while I was unconscious. We were all driving down a long winding road. I took a large hit and went under. When I came to Red told me that I was licking the windows of the car and shouting, "The telephone poles are erect!" The road was from then on known as Freon road. It was very funny at the time for all concerned. But when I think about it now I wonder what the hell that actually meant. The telephone poles are erect? I didn't understand what a phallic symbol had to do with the high. Then of course I was licking the windows. I may have been so delirious that I thought I was licking the telephone poles. And my unconscious behavior was somehow indicative of my attempt to solve the riddle while I existed apart from physical reality. It took me some time to realize that the drug was capable of allowing a person to reveal repressed desires in the same way as hypnosis. Another time I passed out in a baseball field with a bunch of my friends as we were playing baseball. It was my turn at bat and I hit the ball and then proceeded to take a large hit of Freon. I made it half way between first and second before I passed out. I came to and went right up to Red saying, "There was something about Melon Head's sister! I could see her ass and she was saying, 'Hicabachu' over and over again." Red found this to be more than amusing, as he did anything I said. The funny thing about Melon Head's sister was that she was no where in sight. I still don't understand the connection between her and the high. It was a very weird hallucination and as I recall it was a pure pulsation of naked energy in the outer limits of my brain. But somehow in the bizarre

and ridiculous nature of Melon Head's sister and what she was saying lied the keys to the mechanics of the universe. Encoded in that senselessness was an ultimate reality that spoke of eons hatching eggs upon the preposterous notion of time. It came to be that I wasn't just doing it for the high anymore. I foolishly imagined at the time that there was a great value in the curiosity of wearing myself thin among the multiplying particles of existence. Being high on Freon was like being in a world that kept eluding me further into deeper recesses of my mind. The more I did Freon the closer I came to solving the riddle. I often came back from the high and tried to explain to everyone what it was like. The riddle was so sublime in a consciousness that was escaping itself. There was a dimension where sight and sound collided in the absence of time and space to create the raw intelligence of preexisting thought. It was of a nature that seemed to be embedded in the creation of the universe. Often I couldn't put it into terms that were understandable and I was never able to solve the questions that it posed. Only in symbolic thought was I able to rationalize the riddle. It didn't take long for me to become known as a Freon addict. But when you abuse any kind of drug you can start to lose site of which world you're in. This is especially true with hallucinogens. It was starting to control and distort my life so I put it down. But unfortunately I had already been mesmerized by the mastery of an elaborate reality in the creative hands of an eternal presence. And there was a vehement festivity in the wicked gardens that burned endlessly in the associations of these exotic fruits that I

happened upon. So much of life was dependent on the fondling of my mind as I voyaged through this often-perilous party of a frenzied immaturity.

I moved on to marijuana when it became available to me. Around the same time I picked up another expensive habit. Smoking cigarettes was a decision I made out of boredom and it was a costly one. It has taken more than $10,000 and I am still struggling with the addiction. But Marijuana was going to numb the stupidity of that decision. I delighted in the mild frequency of what seemed to be a very natural surf through the humorous identity of a dope. That was the initial intelligence on the surface of this drug. It was not as intense as Freon but longer lasting. Easier to obtain than liquer we often smoked at least three times a week if not more. Just finding a place to sit and listen to music made our time on pot worth while. We didn't need to have something to do. All we needed was a place where we could laugh. That was all we did anyway, but pot seemed to enhance the experience into a condensed can of unusually slow elation that combusted in intervals of extravagant silliness. The drug often made my knees numb with a vibrating sensation. It traveled to my head in a current of foolishness that distinguished a feeling of falling from a dizzying height. When I was alone it was so easy to induce a self-hypnotic state on pot. It was as if I was being mesmerized by a strobe light of voluptuous curves that performed an erotic dance at the strip club of sensation. This made every perception a brilliant work of art that paralleled the enticement of

beholding the steam that glistens on a woman's body in the temperature of an orgasm. The nature of sexual appetite is in metaphor the best comparison that describes the vigor of this deep lust that I encountered. It was as if I was naked in my mind and rendezvousing with experience for the first time. The penetration into the mechanics of occurrence started to saturate in the seduction of magic that moved mysteriously in the eroticism of the moment. This affair of uninhibited passion that embraced the warm and soft skin of sensory information began to develop into a serious problem later in life as it made me paranoid. But at the time I never imagined there was anything other than the moments of intimate arousal that found me making love with the synchronization of music and empty gazes.

The life that I was not careful in choosing was to become the tragic constructions of paranoia in a haunting that sought to rob me of my life. Things were changing drastically in the advancing of a dangerous mania. During the summer of my sophomore year I was starting to hang out with a different crowd. I still had all of my old friends from the China Bright Posse, but in addition started to enter another social circle of delinquents. Actually they were more than that. Some of them were Mafia potential. They were the rough edges of society and their philosophies were enforced by the all too serious nature of actions that made the world miserable for others. The decent into the darker regions of life never starts out as a knowingly precarious venture. It was something that I slipped into in the foolishness of my age. My judgement was severely impaired in the

intoxication of my newly found imperishability. And my choices of friends coincided with that dominion of manic youth. What had been entertainment was shaping into the hazardous materials of organized insanity. The youth of my town was enthralled in the exhilaration of banging heads with one another. I was seduced into the history of my father's background, as I tasted the intensity of the street that he grew up on. It was a shining orgasm of mania that brought life into a volcano of heightened stimulation where my actions proceeded the safety of good judgement. I was wrapped in the craze of being a reckless youth. For thrills, every so often we headed out to the mall looking for people to fight with. I remember one time one of my friends assaulted someone in the parking lot of one of the malls. There was no reason for it. But we thought it was very amusing. I was caught up in the electricity of a lightning storm that ravaged through the streets and perpetuated a disturbing flow of disregard that only served to humble me in a great humility of disgrace later in life. The people that I was associating with characterized a great deal of my town's youth. This was the way things were where I lived. And they were not the types of people to look back in humiliation as they took great pride in their behavior. I was only one of them in my mania, which I eventually learned to recognize ahead of time after years of dealing with the attributes of my illness. But at this time I was living the sins of my father. We used to hang out at this fast food place on one of the more busy streets in town. One night we were hanging out and all of a sudden someone came up to a large group of

us and said that so and so was in trouble at the restaurant across the street. In a matter of minutes, we transformed into a swarm of bees (there were about twenty of us) surrounding three rather large men. They were about to beat the shit out of two of our friends. All I remember is one of us grabbing a bat and swinging it wildly in an animalistic response to the threat that came into our town. The next thing I knew there was a violent scream and a man on the ground gripping his arm in pain. Then we all proceeded to assault them. We were all much younger then they were, but it didn't matter. They crossed a group of kids who were savage in their dedication to demolish the world. They ran into the entrance of the restaurant as a few of us followed and continued to attack them.

This period of my life was very short, but always shall be a very unnerving and disgraceful anomaly, which formed a rather large constellation of aggression. And it was synthesized in the midst of an amusement that should have taken it seriously. But I was an idiot of youth riding the chrome horses of the Wild West in an adventure that didn't have a pleasant ending. I wasn't one to contemplate endings and I should have. When school started the next year I was too involved with my circle of friends and drugs to be productive. An education wasn't important to me. One night a dance was held in the high school gymnasium. I went with my friends and was heavily intoxicated. (It didn't take much back then to get me drunk.) I ended up assaulting someone that I didn't particularly like. As I remember I could barely see him as I threw a wild punch. I didn't have a reason

for it. I just didn't like him. I was so out of control and ridiculously detached from the world that I was moronic in my relation to reality. I was taken away by the police and disoriented beyond my even knowing. The first thing the policeman said after he placed me in the back of his car was, "I guess you can't handle your liquor." I looked at him through his rear view mirror and said, "Well, at least I didn't throw up." I was trying to make light of the situation. But there was no making light of this magnificence of stupidity that was influencing my behavior. When they took me to the station they debated whether or not to have me placed in the state's training school. That got me worried. I wasn't too thrilled about having to do time for simple assault and the consequences of my action were far removed from my concept of the world and how it actually worked. They decided to let me go, and in retrospect I was very fortunate that I only received a warning. The first thing I did when I was released was go back to the high school to find my friends. They were long gone. I went home and slept it off. I didn't realize until the next morning how much of an ass I had made of myself. A lot of the teachers and guidance counselors were aware of my problem. I ended up getting suspended and when I came back I was given a hard time by some of the school faculty. I was the poster child for the ill-fated youth of America that were most likely to be found making license plates for a living.

Enough was enough for me. I knew that in my heart I was not like this. And I knew that I wasn't just another thug. I involved myself too deeply in an episode that was going untreated. At the time I

thought it was simply my age. I was in the bleeding heart of rebellion. But when I assess my life there was something so irregular in the rhythm of my propellers. Something had to give and it was just a matter of time. I decided it best to distance myself from these new friends. I started to realize where I was headed with this crowd. I was always impaired in my foresight. But I knew that without their influence my behavior was going to tame. I no longer needed to impress anyone with an outrageous behavioral pattern. I look back on this part of my life in shame not just because of my behavior, but because much of it was an attempt to be recognized as one of the guys. And if I was truly anything it was not one of them. That chameleon had infiltrated the wrong environment. Had I kept hanging around with them into my fully matured life I could quite possibly be dead by now. Nevertheless I found the violence exhilarating. I was not a stranger to displays of aggression in the confusion of my life. Being among a posse of sorts there was a barbaric channeling of anger even within the group. The heightened uncertainty of day to day life began to dissipate my confidence in belonging with the street. And I suddenly leaned towards the realization of peace in my own behavior. I didn't plan to live my entire life on the streets of a town that worshiped the idols of pandemonium. My days as a tough guy ended quite abruptly and I was soon to come across the sunshine of my life. I had found the elixir of the goddess in the underground of my school. This was

something that planned to caress the ripples of my mind in the bewitchment of my feminine nature.

I recognized LSD as the artist's drug and the deity of self-discovery. I was eager to experiment with it in a scientific dialogue of Dr. Frankenstein's inception of life. I did a lot of research on it first. I read everything I could about it. I read about all the bad trips and such. You can read as much as you want about LSD but until you experience it you will never have a clue. I read about one person who did LSD and then for a month he stayed in his room as friends brought him food. He believed that he was an orange. If someone were to touch him he was going to burst. Hence he had to stay in his room and avoid contact with people. At the time I thought this story was quite amusing. But in actuality it is rather tragic. None of the stories were going to persuade me against the drug. I had formed myself an identity on the street that painfully damaged my agile creativity in the bitter trenches of meaningless brutality. It was necessary to me that I at least attempt to dwindle away from the nonsense of a furious attitude. The *Doors* movie had just opened in theaters and the pagan poetry of Jim Morrison along with the eerie mood of his music were dominant in the main stream. There was a collective conscious of exploring the psychedelic as though it was a new religion that had infiltrated the heart of my school. LSD was a siren of pure sorcery that danced in the distant horizon as it guided my craft to the womb of my mind. The intelligence that I found in Freon was one of immortality that spread thin across the inane synthetics of

a deprived brain. Death to me was very much a nightmare that happened in an alternate reality. It wasn't something that happened in my world and my existence was the construction of a flight simulator that was capable of penetrating the inferno of the sun. I was still Beefy Jones whose intercourse with absurdity was immortal. I was still snowballing in a manic episode. Only now my course was deviating entirely from a societal standpoint and entering that place where imagination breathes the liquid of psychic energy. I had no anxieties about doing any type of drug. I wasn't worried about the effects it might have on the chemistry of my brain. And I wasn't fully conscious of the mania of my personality at the time. From my second year at high school I got on board a shuttlecraft that didn't know how to stop. I was hoping to touch the goddess of my imagination and I was enthralled with visual stimuli. To be able to see things that elude the average person intrigued me. What I really wanted was to see some vivid hallucinations. I wanted a spectacular light show of fireworks and surreal imagery. My anticipation of doing LSD was enough to fill me with the craze of the experience itself.

I remember my first trip. It was an eerie collision with an essence of being that caused an overall feeling of déjà vu. There was a female deity that seduced a mood in me of well being that I couldn't help but imagine was at the core of my personality waiting for me to rediscover it. I was with a group of friends including my brother that still banded together from the times of chaos at China Bright. I didn't

know what to expect from the trip and I didn't really think that anything was going to happen, as I had been let down before in previous attempts to acquire the drug. We were all walking at night and came to the entrance of a college campus near my home. Lights lit up a welcome sign for the college. We all stopped and started staring into the lights. I don't think any of us even knew it was starting to take effect because it came on so slowly. The high takes from a half an hour to an hour to begin. Once it begins it takes off like a rocket yet paradoxically time slows down and relativity can be observed as what seems to take an hour may in actuality only take ten minutes. This was especially true as we were all gazing into the lights like a bunch of morons for what seemed like too long. And none of us really knew why. The answer soon revealed itself to me as the glow stayed in my field of vision when I turned away from it. It remained with me wherever I went and it was jolly like a pleasant alien that visited me from mars bringing the illumination of peace. I could center on it and communicate within its structure with a telepathy as the more I focused the more brilliant and defined it became.

Another thing I quickly realized on my first trip was that none of it was real. Not that the trip itself wasn't real, but the fabrication of physical reality was an illusion and I suddenly came upon that revelation as if I had always known it. Doing Freon abstracted me entirely from this world of material being. Physicality is so convincing that I had to breathe in its existence as a world unto itself.

But in doing LSD I was able to exist in both inner and outer processes at the same time as I differentiated them simultaneously. There was a funny feeling of existentiality that accompanied the drug. The best way to describe this is not in philosophical terms, but through imagery. Imagine a painting as you are looking through the eyes of another person. You can see the circular forms that encompass the eyes and you can see the double vision of the nose. In this painting you can also see what is visible of this person's body as he or she surveys the scenery that is in front of them. This stepping back into the recess of physical form became a profound matter of distinguishing an inner presence that was watching a screenplay. In the beginnings of truly opening my mind to the feminine nature of philosophical thought I was giving way to a divine movie that I was part of. But it didn't really seem to be occurring, as if I was removed from it. My field of vision was more of a projection of shadows and everyone with me were actors. They were playing the roles of their lives in a play of personas. This movie theme was dominant whenever I was with people on LSD and it made for interesting plots and scenarios that were sensationalized by my imagination. But this revelation was just the tip of an ice burg that awaited the Titanic of my corporeal identity. There were more levels that needed to be explored in the unearthing of an actuality that few have been able to find. At the time I didn't grasp in linguistic terms that there was a greater self behind my perceptions. If this was more or less a dream that was being assembled in the virtual reality of my senses there had

to be a dreamer. And being of an accelerating mania it had to be someone who was verging on the awakening of a maddening height. If nothing was real then I was in the middle of nowhere, which seemed to be what constituted the organization of my life. I was headed on my way towards an unusual path of self-realization in the more surreal sense of the word.

This path unfortunately did not coincide with a formal education. I had a reputation among the faculty at school that I wasn't going to be able to escape from. The ruins that I left in my wake as I involved myself in an arrangement of unfortunate associations with the dropouts in school were building to exemplify my mania. Everyone loved me because I was so crazy but I was building a reputation that was damaging my studies. I wasn't concerned with any thing that had to do with school. There was one occasion where a guidance counselor met with my father and myself to get a better understanding of why I was having so much difficulty. I remember telling him how I had a good relationship with my grandfather during the meeting. He sat there and said, "Oh, so you put the arm around old grandpa." As if I was some kind of scum who used everybody and everyone. I walked out of his office and left my father there. I never returned to the school. There were some teachers that I liked who liked me because I was actually a good student when I put my mind to learning. But the overall stench of wasting more of my life in that outhouse of a school was sickening. I didn't learn anything in high school. The culmination of what might have been a high school

diploma didn't signify anything important to me. What good was algebra in the underground of the real world? They were trying to teach me a higher knowledge in an atmosphere that was berserk with distractions. It was like going to a wild party and reading a book. You just can't do it. I don't regret that I dropped out. At the time I did what was right for me. But to my parents this was me doing whatever the hell I wanted. I wasn't just dropping out of school. I was dropping out of life and they knew it. Or at least the life that we come to know as being a construct of society. I imagine that they were frustrated and disappointed with me. I hadn't really turned out the way that they expected and I could have cared less about making them proud of me. They had their difficulties in trying to establish a relationship with me and in my glorious discoveries of altered states they didn't seem to matter. As far as I was concerned at the time my failures were of their own neglect in conversation. I was still a minor and always believed that I was the son that they had the unfortunate responsibility of raising. In turn I had the unfortunate position of being their son. It wasn't until I submerged in the massive undertaking of this book that I truly got my act together and stopped blaming my parents for my shortcomings. I recognize that we all have our inadequacies in how we relate to one another and it was difficult to understand me because of my illness. My father had his own problems with depression and it was never easy for him to relate to any of us. My mother was always harsh with me more so than with my brothers and I unjustly blamed her for too much. There finally

came a point where I had to take responsibility for my own life and stop stunting myself in the frustrations of never letting go. I was able to establish strong bonds with my parents because each of us is willing to forgive our mistakes. The dynamics of love that are rooted in my family are stronger than the insanity that often tears most other unions apart. In the progressing multiplication of my mind I have matured to become very close with them and we communicate well. We all know each other better and are comfortable with one another. But unfortunately it took a long time for us to get where we are today and there were many difficulties that compiled in my life to aggravate those relationships.

About a week after I left school I received a phone call from Red. He, along with my brother and Fingers had cut school that day and wanted to know if I would go with them to this kid's house. The kid in question was mildly retarded and everyone at school made fun of him. Sometimes we went over his house to get stoned and drink his wine while his parents were away. I am very ashamed and humiliated to say that I was one who joined the crowd in using this poor kid. I agreed to go and met them on the way to the house just to hang out. When we got there we sat in the basement watching television and drinking wine. He had plenty of porno. "Where's the pussy?" He always shouted. Red always messed with his head, as was Red's way. "Come on. Let's go out. Where going to go get the pussy!" Then we let him drive us around all day only to disappoint him. I was confused in the wrong types of situations with a crowd that was only

deepening itself into more trouble. This started to hit me square in the face as I was becoming conscious of the changes in them and the changes in myself as I did LSD. This drug has the ability to create drastic ripples in the ocean of the personality. To such a point that there can be a complete metamorphosis in the ego of an individual. In many ways it is a dangerous affair of alterations within the psyche. As I was able to observe in myself at the time the changes came naturally and I welcomed them with an affection that transfigured me. I began to appear more androgynous and I wasn't really fitting in with the others anymore. My childhood was revealing itself to me in the electricity of circuitry that was featured in the soothing machinery of my brain. While we were there each of the guys took turns going upstairs to the bathroom and stole whatever they could get their hands on. I knew what they were doing though I didn't expect it. They wanted me to go upstairs but I declined. I went over there to have a good time. After I began to use LSD the only illegal activity that I could stomach was doing drugs. Somehow altering my state of mind didn't seem like a crime. And I didn't want to get into any trouble with this kid's parents. Sure I took advantage of him in that I laughed at his goofy nature and drank his wine. I was very young and had not learned many of life's lessons. I really didn't know any better, though I most certainly should have. It's difficult to explain as being part of a crowd. As I stood individually I was quite a different person and I was encountering that person for the first time. My behavior seemed to me to be in synch with my age, though I think it was more in synch

with the idiots I knew. But I was maturing in quite a different direction than the others. The amusement at his expense was a fact of my life that I deeply regret. My remorse is so solemn that I have immortalized it in the monument of these words. Even at the time there was a great distinction between having fun with someone and stealing from them. Unlike the others I was the only one that was capable of seeing him as a human being. Red was often the ringleader and he never grew out of this mentality. I was eventually going to learn very painfully what it was like to suffer from retardation as life often deals us cards that we don't expect. But first I verged on making a dramatic stand that was going to alienate me in my individuality.

After about an hour of sitting around we decided to leave. As we were walking down the street they all flaunted their newly found possessions. It was just a bunch of costume jewelry. I still don't know why they bothered to waste their time. I went home and slept off the buzz. I didn't think anything else about it until later that night. I received a phone call from his mother. I had smoked some pot about a half an hour before my father told me that she was on the phone. I was very fortunate to have a group of friends of which included my brother that left my name and phone number on his parent's answering machine. Without my knowledge they did this before they left to meet me at his house. When I picked up the phone his mother was screaming bloody murder and wanted to see me beheaded before the majesty of madness that we all invoked in her. I

didn't understand what she was saying and I had never experienced a furious wreck of unraveling emotion while I was in the hypnosis of marijuana. It was as though I had tortured and killed someone in an atrocity punishable by death. I found myself in court as a family member of the victim violently lashed out at me. Never before in my life had someone been so enraged in frenzy with me. I was the wretched and vile excuse of a human being that didn't deserve to breathe the same air as the rest of the world. I've never felt more ashamed of myself as when I looked through this woman's eyes. To grasp the heartache that we caused her was so overwhelming to me that I thought to bury my head in the sand for the rest of my life in a penance that burrowed deeper into an inner world. I tried to tell her that I didn't steal anything but she didn't listen and it didn't matter. I was with them and that was significant enough. I was so stoned and paralyzed in disbelief that they left my name and number. The last thing I was expecting was a phone call. After getting hollered at for a good ten minutes by a woman who herself was apparently afflicted with a mild form of retardation I hung up the phone. I went to sleep knowing that I had been set up by the stupidest criminal minds ever to plague the earth. And I couldn't believe that I was among them in their malicious act of breaking the heart of this poor woman. In one swift blow I was reduced to the stench of my toilet. And it was all because of my choices in friends. They had another thing coming.

The next morning I received a phone call from a detective from the local police department. He wanted to know what was going on.

He said that if the jewelry was returned no charges would be filed. I was furious that I had to be the one to collect the jewelry and return it to the police as being perceived as the criminal mastermind behind this ridiculous heist. I ended up giving out names and I didn't think twice about it. They had planned for me to take the rap for them from the beginning. I don't know who they thought I was. I had been neighboring on the edge of a conscience and these were people who didn't know what an inner voice was. I didn't steal anything and I shouldn't have been the one who had to deal with the headache and emotional turmoil it created. They were complete assholes that sought to involve me in their illegal activity as if to say, "Look how stupid we can be." They didn't have a promising career ahead of them. The detective suggested to me that I stop associating with them. Unfortunately "them" included my brother who hid in his room while I had to deal with the unpleasantness of it all. He wasn't a bad kid at heart and he felt just as much shame as me. He was actually very deep in his childhood roots, but at the time like me he was very susceptible to the polluted influence of others and we were both capable of behaving off of the beaten path. But neither of us held these attributes of disgraceful activities in the substructure of our psyches. As far as both of us knew this was a product of a passing phase that arrested a reckless youth. But the difference between us was that for me this was a ferocious encounter with the human elements of unbridled rage that accompanied the structure of consequence. And this was something that burned with fury as it

seeped into my heart and within my grasp for the first time. This was my mythical Fisher King wound, which I received in the profound foundation of an altered state. The dancing trance of sensory information was held in the raw flesh of a fiery pain that impassioned a mother in her own disability to seek retribution for her disadvantaged son. This was piercing beyond anything I had ever imagined. I suppose that the thick skin of everyone else I knew could have brushed something like this off. But I had discovered a psychic territory of an over absorbing empathy that I wasn't able to bear. It was so engraving in the metals of my mind that it ruptured a chasm in my psyche that awaited me to sink into the liquid baptism of a forgotten bliss. There was an alternate route, be it a maddening one, into the ocean of an inner world that I could seek in a personal amendment for the life I happened into.

When I gave out the names of my brother and my two friends it was a defining moment in my life that characterized a metamorphosis into a self-conscious awakening of consciousness. But there was a very serious problem for me. I was not accustomed to dealing with hindsight in a way that established what most of us utilize to survive. The building blocks of my memory in the foundation of what had become adulthood were weak in their structure. Before this I lived day to day in an unconscious perfection that was reborn every morning. Suddenly I was cursed in my welcome to the rest of society, as I had to maintain and nurture a mind that I had little experience operating. As absurd as it sounds I didn't know how to think. This

was a great conundrum in the ownership of my mind and I suppose it was exaggerated to alarming levels in the use of substances. But that was never apparent to me. My grandfather pushed me to apply sound reasoning and I had a great potential of raw intelligence that was intuitive and instinctual, but I was still very much a virgin in forming forced thought that formulated educated constructions of life. And that was always what it seemed to be. There was never anything natural about the flow of my thinking. The majority of what the world considered to be consciousness was a result of left-brain functioning in the form of linguistics that performed an array of tasks. I was hindered and practically deformed in my ability to make a cohesive adjustment that allowed me to utilize the building blocks of my mind. It was an unusual transition that found me actually having to teach myself how to think in conjunction with elements of memory. I was what most people considered to be extremely stupid. So stupid that people interpreted my mentality as being crazy. But in actuality I was on the ground floor of thought. To add to this perception of idiocy I was suddenly known as a rat, and in the town that I lived there was no lower form of life. I believed I did the right thing, but in making a stand for what I thought was correct I suddenly lost the respect of the world. It never ceases to amaze me in society that whistle blowers who are in a cause for justice are in turn branded by the world. After this everyone seemed to turn on me in a viscous upheaval of castrating my ability for relations of any kind. The microcosm of my town was an indication of the rest of society where

I suddenly did not belong as a human being. I found out who my friends really were and it turned out that I never had any. The acceptance of vibrant hellos and dramatic goodbyes as a process that has been natural to my existence only resolved in the independence of this book. It was hard for me to face the world in the isolation of a character that is often only known in infamy. I had no prospects. I had no education. I didn't have the type of personality that blended well into the rivers of a corporate world and I was handicapped in my ability to maneuver into the beginnings of a new life. I appeared boyish in my transformation into an adult age. I was arrested in the development of my masculinity as I was expected to suddenly force myself into the wisdom of a long beard. And somehow I had to dig myself out of a town that networked itself against me in the slander of its youth. I was going nowhere in a blazing glory of what others judged to be a pathetic loser. I had suffered many wounds growing up. But this was something that was going to eventually see me lapse into the bowels of a defecating uncertainty if I was not careful. People were no longer who they said they were. I was among kids that thought of the movie *Good Fellows* as an instructional video on how to live life. I was part of that type of environment. The alternate route was one that actually breathed through the lungs of my imagination. And it appealed to me more and more in the chasm of an inner world that ran away from the nonsense of civilization. Further away than I could have possibly imagined.

Its funny that even though you've gained a disreputable label among street associates there are still others who are more than willing to supply you with drugs. Money was always the primary language. LSD was a monumental solution that floated weightless in the faith of the heavens. Of the massive confusion that besieged life in a merry go round of a meaningless venture there was only one answer. And it was found in the chemical alteration of dripping substantiality. LSD was going to harbor me in the tender warmth of an existential discovery. I thought it to be every bit a Eucharist of fire that built brick by brick the cathedral of the goddess. I bought enough of the drug to last me everyday for a month. And it was enough to forget every moment of unpleasantness that had unfolded throughout my life. This was the discovery of a chemical reaction that operated on a mythological level in an immaculate cleansing. I was never aware of the danger, but the pure potency of this substance was capable of washing the brain in concentrated bleach. The situation that led me to the isolation of this mystical mutation was a stain that had been scrubbed away with the detergent of a zealous submarine. The pinnacle of reaching a cohesive consciousness in accordance with survival was in the integration of memory. But I was out at sea and there didn't seem to be a reason to do anything but explore the open miracles of sunlight dancing on the water.

I spent a couple of months to myself dropping acid every two or three days. When I was alone things deepened into the adventures of detectives that meticulously investigated the crimes scenes of

perception. But these were not crimes of venom. They were the mysteries of angels that impressed the sweet breast of their beating hearts upon every pore in my mind. My field of vision was more than a cinematic theater that captured the dramatic performances of an authentic play. It was a barrier of vision that breathed and wavered as it exposed the illusions of the angelic nature that held me dear in a delicate embrace. Colors flew by and formed shapes as though they were being whispered sensuously within the universe of my retinas. I remember the colors being like rainbows that flowed in waterfalls swirling a delicacy of cosmic doilies. Inside the heavens of these gentle rainbows were objects that continually mutated in the joyance of a glorified spirit. It was a vibrancy that intimately stroked my eyes with a love that can only be known in the burning embrace of mythological devotion that is emblematic of Romeo and Juliet. The colors were as free flowing as the continuity of a spring day's softly spoken breeze. I never knew the heaving chest of freedom to such a degree. It was to be swept blindly into the fervent arms of a young maiden that poured rivers of emotion into the canyons of my heart. That was the pure elation of intercourse that illustrated the synergy of my imagination with the meaning of the poor and hopeless character of my existence. I never knew what direction the kaleidoscopic was going to take and the organization of the colors was so fluid that they were elusive in defining a predetermined pattern. The objects changed almost by thought as though they were a reflection of the fabric that held my mind together. Beyond this spectacular

psychedelic orgasm of ornamental designs was a reality that was not ascertainable by the mind. I imagined that the actual objects of sight as they existed apart from my mind could be found in this famous arena of nothingness that evaded every member of existence. To simply step over onto the other side seemed possible in the mania of this miraculous world. And I had found the aid of a goddess that I exemplified in the chemical alteration of my brain. There was a foreplay that caressed the fragility of my soul as she was working like Michelangelo to chip away the rough edges towards the figure that I truly was. I was in the novice beginnings of acquiring the affection and faithful love that accompanied the wisdom of the feminine mind. My overall impression of perception was drowned in certainty as to the illusion of it all. I touched on it in my use of marijuana, but now everyday was fluid with the liquid of an external world that dribbled its substances into puddles of fantasy. The over stimulation of visual stimuli was predominant to any other. And now the almost computer generated reality of paintings and photographs became a world that needed to be examined extensively. If anything my pilgrimage was in the acquisition of a passionate love that inhaled the wisdom of creativity. The elegance of my then poetic patterns of thought was cradled by a femininity that drenched the universe in an exquisite show of affection. The faucet of words can only offer a shimmering taste of what I was coming to know in the open arms that welcomed me into the tenderness of the cosmos.

The rhapsody of LSD was the love affair of an imagination that had gone completely wild in a feast of sweetened lucidity. I was suddenly fascinated with serving a feminine power and involving myself in the gentle-heart of my psyche. The blaze of this devotion was united with philosophy as my first true love. The study of truth was the worship of subtleties and aesthetics that graced the personalities of women. To seek life's meaning was to woo the heart of a princess. My observations were flirtatious encounters that overflowed in the excitement of courting existence. When I looked at something for an extended period of time I'd actually forget what it was. The drooling matter of material existence became no more than the objects of sight that were originally impressed upon me in infancy. There was no meaning to any object of sight that I was able to liquidate into the virginal intercourse with actuality. There was no defining anything that I focused on in the striking state of correspondence between substance and mind. At times I arrived in existence an alien of being. It was a monumental revelation to consciously abstract myself in a sensual freedom into the outer limits of this tellurian thing we construct as reality. If you repeat a word to yourself over and over again it will lose its significance and become an odd sound that you are unfamiliar with. Looking at something was very similar. Objects became nothing more than abstract designs, which were cuddled in the sacred communion of my brain and its perceptions. I could have stumbled upon a pile of dog shit and greatly admired it for its unique contribution of overflowing texture. Of

course the smell might have cautioned me away. But the fact of the matter was that each substance of existence belonged in a state of actuality that was engaging in its own right. There was no distinction between ugly and beautiful - modest and magnificent. Everything was of an interest that exposed the raw sensation of itself. Something as simple in design as a leaf could have overwhelmed my senses in the joy of its peculiar relation to reality. To arrive at the utterly simple fact that they fall from trees was enough to rejoice in tears. The boggling miracle of partaking in the soaring skies of actually existing was what this angelic chemical emphasized. To reach a form of infancy in knowing that I was a part of this colossal phenomenon of life was so breathtaking that to be alive was to be summoned into the lips of the sun with my tongue. Even in the rippling pond of my reflection I was a vortex of substance that mutated in the reverberating expressions of my eyes. The concept of myself was revolving towards deeper levels that were intertwined with cosmic patterns of light.

I choose to do LSD during the night. There was always more contrast between light and shadow in the glistening stars of the heavens. Much of the experience was to capture the energy of light particles in the oceanic sponges of my retinas. I spent many late nights in my parent's basement gazing into the eternal mystification of a light bulb. There was the security of a romantic island in the heart of silence that no one could reach. The rest of the world slept in their own encounters with the enigmas of their dreams. But my

dreams were living in the luminous awareness of a mind that continually bathed in the animation of light waves. For me there was no greater fascination in the splendid ballet of time, which appeared to deviate its dance in my forgetting its wheels. After weaving with the spirit of an electric sun for a good five minutes or so I shut it off. Then I gazed into the hallowed corners of darkness that filled my childhood imagination with the demons of Satan's workshop. But there was never darkness and in the shadowy reaches of my soul the virtuous wings of angels formed a gathering of fondness. It transformed my vision into the jolly concentration of swimming through the fluids of enlightenment. The light always remained in my eyes as I seriously fooled with the thought of going blind. To lose my vision seemed a small price to pay for the joyously asexual intercourse of my brain's continually reorganizing recognition of this energetic stimulus. And as I knew from before I found that the more I concentrated the more brilliantly it transformed into a pattern that was characteristic of my mind's texturing of radiance. The more I focused the more defined it became as a raw process of thought. It was like an aura of different colors and inside it was filled with zigzag lines of white that pulsated and moved back and forth. The choreography of these patterns sustained a mood that was massaged in the bountiful echo that synchronized my brain. There was a pure energy that fluctuated in an illumination, which associated itself with a great joy and well being. If I were to lose focus the pattern floated away from me and I 'd have to concentrate again to bring it back. The more I

concentrated the more I became one with the ornament. Like staring at the floor in my bathroom as a child everything else seemed to fade away. There was no thought that was remarkable as being analytical or categorical. I never asked why or what or tried to put it into terms that were ascertainable by my left brain. There was nothing but the pure processes of light and my relation to it as I existed. We were necessary parts of each other in a marriage of long time friends and nothing further needed to be known. I even seemed to lose awareness of my body as I frolicked in the frequencies of my mind. The whole process lasted about five to ten minutes before this blueprint of mental imagery faded to a point that could no longer be seen. Then I turned the light bulb on again and repeated the process. It doesn't sound like anything exceptional, but to me it was a unique state of being that I could control and experiment with. And in actuality it was an intensive process of training my brain. These were militant rituals that exercised the muscles of my eyes to harmonize the inner workings of my mind in an unusual state of concentration. This workout was going to lead to something that was unprecedented in my understanding of life.

The warm feeling that accompanied most of my trips enchanted me in a realm of make believe where I lost myself in a forest of love. I felt rather secure in my isolation when I did LSD and the world faded from me as if it were a nightmare that wasn't truly real. For the first time I felt like I was discovering my individuality as I was encompassed in the submergence of my own reflection. But there

was no vanity in my existence as I was humbling under the open sky of creation. The concept of myself was blossoming into the beauty of an interstellar stamp that had been impressed upon being. I was a child of birth in the swaying arms of a mother that gathered the stars in the machinery of my brain. I had no concept of what other people thought of me. My identity as it once was reckless and immature was suddenly missing in a chemical that granted me a vacation from my past in a rebirth. In the isolation of my magnificent moon the night revealed the distance of an earth that I could gaze at in the joy of knowing I wasn't a part of its madness. Everything glistened with the sugar of its sweetened taste in my eyes. There was a magical aura that surrounded the beating hearts of dead matter. Everything was alive in a fairly tale of a speaking reality. Being alone meant that I did not need any defenses. The empathy of an overwhelming correspondence between the miracles of matter and mind formed a liquid of imagination between them. There were no walls in any relations of existence and everything flowed into each other. I felt my emotions swim from the breath of my lungs and float throughout the air around me as they seeped into the pulse of the earth's possessions. I knew peace as it was in the many gardens of creation throughout the myths and fables of humanity. And I spread it about my environment in the miracles of my mind. I was able to communicate with the inanimate in emissions of emotional radiation. My situation in life granted me this period of discovery. I had no responsibilities and I was in the freedom of the air that I breathed. I wasn't working and I

wasn't going to school. I was free from all relations that sought to influence my mind in the pollution of the world. The future was something that happened to other people and the only sight I needed was in the whirlpool of electric orgasms. I didn't have a care in the world and my passion of the experience spilled into floods that could have carried me so far away that I lost touch completely with mankind. I picked up the pen for the first time in my life and wrote of the endless love that so intimately constructed the architectural palace of the experience. There was a chaste devotion to a female deity that I had inverted myself into in the flickering candle of the drug. She wasn't something that I knew of consciously, but there was definitely an influence over me that was guiding me to discover her. And I was overflowing with a gentleness that was shaping me towards the fragility of over absorption.

LSD seemed to expose a great variety of innocent understandings to me. Recently I held my brother's new born baby. The gentle connection of seeing him fidgeting in the wonder of his own relation to the world was in purity the marvel of my own intelligence on this drug. This baptism of an exquisite and heavenly madness if you will was making me more sensitive and more aware of my place in the seal of the universe. But it was only in craze in my escape from mankind. To my own awareness at the time it was the blessing of a synthesizer that played the ghost in my machine. I was developing a cosmic conscience that was sending me to the further reaches of a compassionate ocean where the waves showered me in an abundance

of celestial emotion. Never before had I felt the doves trickle from the fingers of Aphrodite's touch upon the flowing windows of perception. Music was a free for all of sequences that poured mountain streams of a beloved mathematics. But unlike the common perception in the rhythms of numeration the heart of rock and roll proceeded in the drama of spilling from the altered solution of time. If I were to have listened to Mozart I imagine that I might have been drowned in a flood of Biblical proportions. Life itself was a series of liquid sensations that splashed within one another in a delight of miracles that rippled in the freedom of a feminine harmony. The ever-flowing liberty of water in its jolly movement through the tunnel of space and time was carving the rocks of reality into the Rushmore of the female divine.

At the same time that I began to involve myself in knitting a fantastic feast of inner beauty I naturally grew dangerously less aware of my presence on earth. I developed a love affair with the feminine nature of my personality. And with the pure love of a cosmic ballroom and the Cinderella of psychic energy came the stunned eyes of the blind. I truly dissolved my former self in the antiseptic of a holy honey that coated the walls of my psyche. And I was drifting further and further away from the construction of reality that most people considered so substantial in its house of straw. Acid was even more surreal than Freon in its fluidity over an extended period of time. And it was in such a way that I never knew myself to be more alive. With LSD the high lasted about eight hours. There was more to

work with than with other drugs and the creativity of thought was condensed in the intensity of the inspiring journeys. During my days I gathered the fruits that were left behind from the trips. I spent hours daydreaming of virtuous impressions. I was becoming childlike as I drifted among the soft caress of my senses. But I started to isolate for long periods of time, and my associations with family were dwindling into the dry riverbeds of insignificance. I know that my parents had their suspicions about my drug abuse, but they had no idea that I was dropping acid every other day. I did it all right under their noses. My father smoked pot secretly ever since Vietnam and he knew his hypocrisy in preaching to me. My mother was overly concerned when she first suspected my abuse. We did have a very emotional heart to heart that touched me in my inability to control the parade of marching bands that played the pounding drums of running away. I regret deeply that I subjected my mother to the turmoil that she faced in watching me dwindle into oblivion. To this day my father still lives in an arrested development that is often the tragic product of substance abuse, and it has served only to cause my mother nothing but grief and aggravation. I didn't know that drugs were capable of stunting the maturity of an individual. I never imagined the aftermath of abuse as the Hiroshima of a devastated brain. In my life I had a manic roller coaster and there was never anyone operating the ride. My parents always offered me a great deal of privacy in my life, which I always enjoyed during my times as a teenager. My mother was the only one to involve herself in my growth and it wasn't really

her job. It was my fathers. But with this open sea of personal space it was very easy to pull off a retreat in the elaborately sensual whirlpools of my sweepingly kind-hearted room. It was more than just an ordinary room and as Paul McCartny sang in *Sergeant Pepper* it was a place for me to fix a hole where the rain came in. The sheets of my bed were covered in the wilderness of the jungle and crouched lions of courage gazed at me in the untamed majesty of their eyes. The ceiling often opened in a miracle of Moses parting the sea. I lied beneath the stars in the bed of Africa as the heavens danced in an outpouring stretch of mysterious constellations that radiated the heat of my microscopic relation. On the earth of my floor was a delight of critical paranoia. The blending shades that had been melted together in the frozen liquid of the linoleum brought forth the mighty images of surrealism. I worked painstakingly to capture as many of them as I could in the fever of model paint. This was truly a fairyland that inhaled my imagination in its inorganic structure. Eventually I ran out of the drug and didn't have any money left. The romantic civilization of a spiritual gentleness was the immersing discovery of Atlantis. But there was a real world of hostility that I had drastically turned my back on. I was going to have to reacquaint myself with it in the tragic blindness of my fool heartedness.

I only had two adverse reactions on LSD. Both of them occurred when I was with other people. Mostly I used the drug in private, but there were a couple of times that I spent doing it with others towards the end of my escapade. Actually they were really just taking

advantage of my supply of LSD but at the time it didn't seem to bother me. I was in need of a change of pace. As brilliant as this orb of isolation was deep down I knew it was a stroll through a rose garden that was going to wither with the weather. Also I still had a small part of me that wanted to belong in a social setting. It was a dangerous weakness in my character and complete lack of judgement in choosing the setting.

One night I was with my newly found circle. We were parked in a car near a lake that often littered my childhood in a pleasant retreat into nature. I had my walkman with me as I always did when I tripped. It seemed such a marvelous extension of myself in a technological contraption of oozing energy and numeric emotion. And it was an excuse to delve into the volcano of my inner workings. I usually listened to the Beatles. It was the majority of the sixties movement in musical expression that stirred the discovery of a revolution within my psyche as I came closer to the heart of my own alien mind. It was an era of profound artistry that was naked in its emotion. Pink Floyd was another band that had me enthralled in the mystery of its inner workings. Along with the Beatles they both offered a philosophy that was unique to their own soaring through the psychology of the fantastic. This time I was listening to the Beatles' *Magical Mystery Tour*. I sat in the back seat as the colors wove their dainty dresses on the naked bodies of my eyes. They flew in flocks of elegance and exoticism that synchronized my optics with the throbbing heart of music. The free flowing waters of the drug always

co-operated in mixing the solutions of the senses. When John Lennon began to sing *I Am The Walrus* I started to quickly sink inwards as if I was a wavelength of light being swallowed into the dramatic sounds of a black hole. My eyes closed and I could not open them as I entered an eerie union that was synthesized by the theatrical fire of this beautiful chemical. In the watery Atlantis of psychedelic collisions you can actually go mad in the art of your mind. The mind is beyond a reasonable doubt the immaculate strokes of the most majestic canvas. In the onslaught of inner processes where words are a fraud upon the faculties the fountains of true thought appear to erupt in their reclamation of the soul. This song brought forth the hidden springs in what was intense with a ghostly mood of a sudden manic initiation. Out of nowhere a caricature of John Lennon appeared. He was the embodiment of my own psychotic impression of his voice. He was singing like a madman trying to orchestrate the flying fabrics of my mind, "I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together!" Every word rang with a viciousness that I had never noticed when I listened to it before. When he sang, "See how they fly like Lucy in the sky" the colors turned into objects of Lucy that were connected to each other like paper dolls. They flew with an intensity that poured liquid rings of lightning down my throat. With lyrics like, "Elementary penguin singing Hare Krishna man you should have seen them kicking Edgar Allen Poe," I desperately tried to make sense of the illustrations that were forming from the faucets of overdrive. I pleaded for something sound, but ended up succumbing to an

absurdity that washed me away in a torrentially brilliant flood of surreal imagery and irrational connections. The harbor of concrete understanding was a melting of lava and the mad was a shining sun of genius. Towards the end of the number the colors swarmed together like a church choir of bees singing, "Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Everybody Ha! Ha!" The pitch rose as this divine ensemble further sculpted the seductive curves of a creative insanity. Over and over again they kept saying "Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Everybody Ha! Ha!" I became lost in the nonsensical world of what I imagined to be the humor of the absurd. In the tragedy of madness there was a master of surrealism who scoffed at his own insanity in a comedy that was falling off the edge of existence. In the middle of what seemed like an ongoing parade of dementia someone feverishly said, "Get him out of my body!" Then again, "Is he dead? Sit you down father, rest you." And then, towards the end, in the most anguished fashion, a voice said, "Ohhhhh untimely death!" I was helpless in a hypnotic trance to the marching ants of musical experimentation. It wasn't until the song ended that I was free of the senselessness that surrounded me in the laughing tears of going mad. But there was something about it at the time that filled me with the love of the experience. It was all so natural in a beauty that further drifted the cement of sanity apart as the fountain of my migraines came to life in the howling of lucidity.

I had heard the song before and was familiar with all of the little extra sound effects that came with it, but I had never before experienced it to such a degree. I was inside of the song as if I was

swimming underwater along side the whales of aquatic speech. I plunged into the preposterous poetry of the Egg man as my own egg had been scrambled as if it were in a television commercial denouncing drugs. I knew the wildly epic tale of retardation that gave birth to the Walrus. "Ku ku ka Choo" was the pinnacle of a mental process that offered my own mind a window into the suddenly humorous breakdown of being this sluggish creature. But in the water of the mind he was as swift as the lightning that struck the trees of reason. I imagined that Lennon meant it to be experienced this way, but all of the imagery and emotion was subjective to my own imagination as I partook of a fantastic orgy of expression. Some people might say that my interpretation of this song on LSD was a bit over the edge. But the song itself is fantastic enough to inspire the joy of madness. I once heard that he wrote the song on an acid trip. I imagined he was having his fun with words. I was no stranger to irrational, but before this I never conceived that the creative mind was capable of delving so fluently with language in the madly joyous obliteration of each and every rule that held speech together. The energy of the melody was what consumed me and made me susceptible to suggestion. No other song has ever engulfed me in such vivid imagery as *I Am The Walrus* did. When I listen to it now the ghostly union of sight and sound are disassociated. The mesmerizing mood that was an overflowing of inner visual stimulation was so powerful and sublime. In my experience it was something that could only be created to a degree of touching the sun

by the burning strokes of LSD. It was a deafening encounter with one of the greatest musical geniuses to ever walk the earth with an incredibly passionate fire of serious experimentation. I have visual tendencies to create, but even so the Beatles always further inspired me to amplify my own creative mind in trying to break as many rules of artistic expression as I can. It's not easy to develop a unique style, but I've tried to experiment as much as possible. An artist's flexibility is usually the determining factor of breakthrough even if it be only on a personal level. My personal belief is that the extension into madness as it dissolves logic in the poetry of images is the mark of a great artist.

I say the experience was adverse because it was of a magnitude that I had never before known in a comfortable mind. I was introduced to the intensity of inhalants and the absurdity of existence beforehand. But this time I was fully aware of my mind as it melted into the liquid of my optics. It was an awakening in which I developed a greater appreciation for the leaping wonders of words and how they could dizzy my mind in missing pieces. Lennon had taken me for a tour of my own creative insanity. When it ended I was safely placed back into the ordinary world where people were barking in the dog houses of their own insanity.

Another experience that was more injurious than decoratively mad occurred after someone had said something that I did not digest well. I was favoring a social harmony where my sweeping thoughts of a clean slate could drift in the feminine nature of a philosophy that

swam in wonder. But whether I liked it or not I was under an obligation to fill the shoes of an earthly entity. I had floated fairly far off of the shores of a concrete harbor that held my name. So far that even today in revisiting the amazement of the experiences I wonder if I am still diving through the majesty of mermaids that cleansed my eyes to the world above. The flashbacks are gripping to a point of never leaving the chemistry of my system though in time they actually have. The memories are still profound in bathing about photographic lands of love. But at the time I was so young and I really didn't know the first thing about human nature. What I did know was washed away in the overflowing riverbeds of the Nile. The voltage of a feline adoration in the civilization of this drug shrouded me in the mysteries of building my psyche's pyramid. Hindsight was the dark sky of circumstances that had carried my life, which suddenly gave way to the overpowering sun of insight. My inexperience in life and my inability to foresee the dangers of situations were going to brand me in the uneasy chair of electricity that fit me all too well in an earthly throne. I was about to taste the electric fence of blood in a wound that had disassociated me from society in my delicately self-medicated escapade to the moon. When it came right down to the heart of the matter I had become a fragile feather in the aviating art of a mind that bordered on the lunacy of tasting color with the pounding pulse of my tongue. There were waltzing phantasms of sumptuous nymphs that illustrated my creative thought in the affection that only women share with one another. The sheer sensitivity of touch upon the unveiled

mask of my tender face made the grunt of rocks devastate the earth in a quake of Los Angeles. My fragility became the crawling of a toddler in a chemical alteration that made itself apparent to me as we were sitting in a car again. This time we were parked outside of a jewelry factory as was one place that was frequently a harbor for the gatherings of youth in my town. One of the guys turned to his buddy and pushed him furiously as he cocked his arm back ready to strike. They knew of me in high school and everyone in the town was aware of my situation. I suppose I was on the embroiled edge as one of the more foolish characters to walk the streets. Dylan wrote songs about people like me. "You don't rat on your friends!" he shouted as if he was a pitbull foaming at the mouth. Even though it wasn't directed at me I knew it was meant as an antagonizing display to arouse my own fear. Although that was all that was said, it was enough to dig into the yoke of an over stimulated mind. There was a paradox of a beautiful self that introverted into the sunlight of discovery only to be wrapped in the scavenging disease of the street. I had drifted far enough away in my euphoric submarine and to be reminded of the event underwater brought visions of drowning in the violent currents of the ocean.

I had already taken three hits of acid, which was the most I have ever taken. As we sat in the car I felt removed as if someone had turned a switch in my brain that separated my physical world from my inner world. I saw myself in the car from a perspective that was outside of myself. Someone took out a joint and we began to smoke. This was the first time that I mixed marijuana with LSD. About five

minutes after smoking I sensed a violent difference in the high. Instead of rainbows in the rivers of a free flowing thought the instruments of vision that played the Mozart of an organic jubilee were organized into a pattern and pulsating with a prison of sensation. I was on another frequency that established a being of consciousness in an energy field of a rubber reality that bounced back and forth between the here and there of oxygen and asphalt. In Star Trek they have a transporter. It's a wonderfully ingenious contraption in the evolution of science fiction. It dematerializes matter and materializes it in another location. Sometimes in the show people get stuck halfway. They begin to dematerialize but they never materialize anywhere. I felt like I was not fully materialized as if the particles of my consciousness were in a fluctuating pulse of pure energy. The experience was similar to Freon in intensity and it lasted in an inferno of hours. The conflict of my inner world and outer identity collided to disassociate from each other in the misadventure of a Star Trek episode. I went home that night and shook uncontrollably in the corner of my room. The tremors lasted for five hours, as did the disassociation of internal and external realities. My body temperature dropped drastically and I could do nothing to keep warm. That was the last time I mixed marijuana with LSD. And it should have been the last time that I beamed into a situation that was lousy with the past of disgruntled associates. I was dangerously naïve in my belief that things blow over with time and as I forgot so would others. I never

imagined that this was going to be something that I had to remember for the rest of my life.

Those were the only abnormalities of mental derangement that occurred when I used the drug. They arose towards the end of my surreal vacation and they didn't stop me from finishing off what was left of my fiery chemical. I imagined I was a talented researcher in the fluid solutions of madness. But what seemed to be waves of mad encounters had developed into a philosophy of an every day understanding. I was soaring towards a sun of rebirth in a liquor of fire that enveloped me in the greatest experimentation of my life. And after all, as wild as this goddess of a succulent craze was I didn't turn into an orange. Though I did come very close to stranding my eyes in an absurdity of being without a face. As frantic as I sometimes feared I might become on the drug I never attempted suicide, as I have read that some people have done because they could not handle the trip. Eight hours is a long time to think over the intensities of existence. It is especially difficult when the theory of relativity becomes a block of cement that drops on your head in the slowing down of what can involve assessing your entire life. But I never reached a point where I felt so helpless that my fears were going to drown me in the overwhelming of eternity as a produce at the grocery market. I was always able to ride the storm when it approached without freaking out and I never did anything to hurt anyone else. Not even verbally. For me this was a drug of peaceful reflection into the dynamics and wilderness of human thought. The

negative experience of being with people on the substance who harbored hateful energy was a result of an environment that didn't seem to outweigh the nature of my own radiant insight. So I thought that all went well. And so it appeared. I had taken the magic carpet ride of my life and I found Aladdin's lamp in the philosophical nature of my personality. The truth of the matter was that LSD drew me further and further within the substructure of actuality that composed a miraculous symphony of existence. There is nothing more exhilarating than a reflection in the water of a naked mind. But it came at the cost of drifting away from family relations and turning my back on society. With this blazingly mad chemical of Aphrodite's love in the tenderness of strokes that teased me into a frenzy of radiance there was going to be a price to pay that I was not prepared for.

After my use with LSD at about the age of seventeen something oddly unexpected and potently surreal happened to me. It was something that forever changed my life with the consecrated touch in a splitting ax of tranquillity. I was resting on my bed during the afternoon and I was slowly drifting to sleep. It was a recess into deeper levels of awareness that I remember being a sailing vessel vanishing off of the earth's horizon. In an instant this ship was awakened in the splendor of a meditation that discovered the coast of America when suddenly I received a current through my body. It was as if someone plugged my spine into an electrical socket of rapid eye movement. I quickly became fully conscious and found myself

outside of my parent's house standing in front of the back door. I walked into the house and headed towards the basement. As I did everything within the structure of this simulation was exact and precise right down to the scattered objects that littered the floor. I remember looking down the cellar stairs. I didn't want to go down there. I was out of my body as I was able to comprehend the experience at the time. I could have traveled anywhere. But for some reason I was drawn to the basement. As I turned away it all ended. I found myself on my bed again. My spirit back inside the rusting metals of my body. This was something unbelievable in the scope of my reality and I was in amazement of what had just happened. I had actually projected in a sudden burst of electrical stimulation. I happened upon the ability to step outside of myself in lucid imagery. This was different than my previous attempts to disassociate in that there was an actual world of representation that mirrored every detail of my waking life. It was more than a distorted state of consciousness. All my life I had been fascinated with the paranormal quirks of reality and it seemed by pure chance that I crossed over into the wizardry of the unbelievable. But the truth was that even as a child my brain had been in training to develop a lightning bolt of focus. The plausibility of eccentric mental phenomena is not outlandish when it is in actuality a work of neurological art. The neurology of an individual can bring forth the masterpieces that are embedded in the beginnings of human existence. The introduction of chemicals into my system refined my ability to concentrate in a state of hyper acceleration and

reorganizing recognition of inner processes. Unbeknownst to me was that I was about to accelerate into the realization of the fantastic. I closed my eyes determined to project once more. I felt the current repeat through my body in a paralyzing feat of wonder. I found myself in the darkness of my unusually centered mind. There were two ovals on either side of my vision that seduced me to harness my mind in the fluffing feathers of what was a great ease. In a gently effeminate flow of virtuous invigoration I brought the ovals together to form a portal. As soon as this gateway was forged in my chaste anticipation of a wondrously delightful exploration the small enclosure opened in a blaze of staggering joy. In a sudden of life's affectionate love of itself I was highly endowed with an awe-inspiring vision of a giant spinning wheel. It was mechanical in nature, like a computer that was buzzing in the divinity of heaven's gate. But being an obvious device of a supernatural mind it was also vibrant and very much alive with the overflowing of a passionate heart. It was an entity of pure energy and of cosmic proportions that humbled me in the exposed mind of my existence as though I was unclothed before the eyes of the world. It looked like a schematic of the universe if you can possibly imagine the heavens as a tree that had been cut in half. Or even an onion that was sliced to show all of its layers. The layers were like rings of ethereal fire that burned peacefully in sacred devotion to this sacrament of being. The center paralleled the brilliance of an impassioned and loving sun that filled my heart with a light that was as gentle as a new born and just as easy to gaze at in the

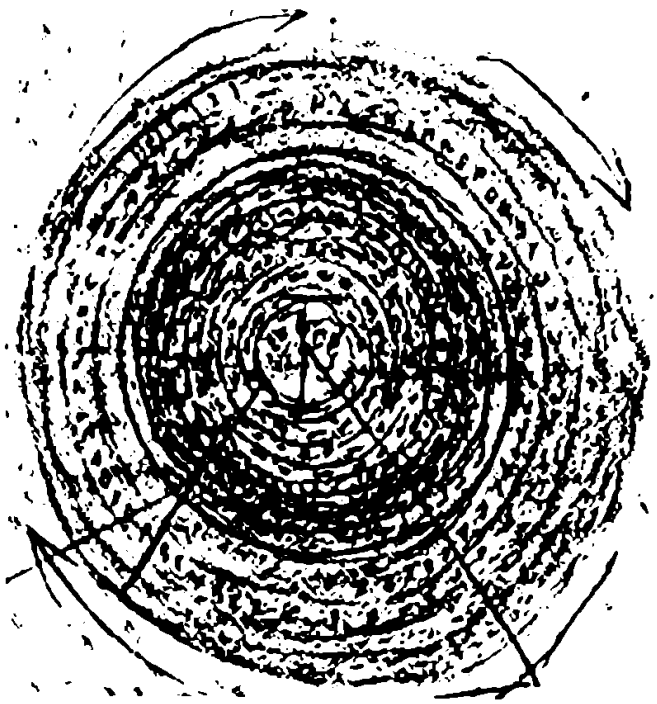
wondrous miracle of life. The layers were patterned in different colors that radiated around this structure of jolly energy. The colors were of a brilliance that can only be known in the eye of the mind. Unlike objects in the world that presented various colors these were living with energy in the cloth of eternity. The outer most layers of the schema were red with life giving blood. This river of life flowed into the next layers of purple. Then it blended from blue to green to the inner most layers, which were yellow. It resembled a circular rainbow and in the blending of colors there was the palette of creation. Each layer was segmented like a circular string bean that held many different seeds. These seeds were visible in hypnotic acceleration as they took the form of signs or characters. As the wheel spun in a hyper rotation of holding its dynamics in place the signs constantly changed as if they were continually being reorganized. It occurred to me quit quickly that they were a matrix of combinations that worked in unison with each other to create individual schemas. There must have been thousands of them swimming in the order of perfection. I do remember that one of the signs continued to change into the letter "X." I still don't know the significance of that, but I can speculate that it corresponded to the image in the center. Looking back it appeared to be a celestial database of human existence. Everything I ever wanted to know about life had suddenly come to me in the surreal crowning of an exaltation that I was not equipped to handle properly. The Immaculate union with something of this magnitude can boggle the

mind in dealing with it to a point where you are afraid to. I was going to learn the many facets of having this vision, but as I had it I was in the rapture of the moment. As the wheel spun it made a low humming sound, which hypnotized me in the synchronizing of my brain waves. And there were two vague and distorted figures slowly spinning opposite each other in the center of the wheel. I kept thinking that they resembled me in my impression of myself as I swam in the rivers of reflection that had flooded in the use of LSD.

The whole thing lasted about ten seconds, but for those ten seconds I felt the content of a pure love that I had never known in this world, and I suppose I never will. I was so amazed in the glory of what was the very texture of joy in the dancing circles of virginal intercourse. This was the climax of a manic episode that carried me too far. So far in fact that a regression to matter was a penitentiary of purgatorial situations. I remember having a feeling of total peace, as life need not be explained further than the cosmic wheels of tranquility. When it ended I found myself back in the solitary confines of an archaic form that rested on my bed. I immediately made a sketch of my encounter with the compassionate master of a universal destiny. The first thoughts that came to mind as I was drawing the design was that of a Native American medicine wheel and then of a graphical representation of my unconscious mind. It was so strong in the dearly embracing love of an Immaculate Conception of raw mental energy that I even considered it to be the God. I was so far away in my journey to the bottom of the sea. I had

touched upon something that was of an extraordinary nature and so magnificent that to express it was to draw a stick figure of Michelangelo's David. In that frustration was the maddening curse that had just blown my mind into the expansion of the cosmos only to be filtered by the sad conditions of communication. This was just one of the prices that I had to pay. Before this brief moment I could never have imagined something quite as miraculous. To dream something like this up was beyond my ability and to feel the beauty touch me in a deep involvement of brain activity was not within the scope of illusion. There was without a doubt in my mind an intensive neurological anomaly that had been forming a constellation since my birth unto this world. My brain was bizarre with a force that was revealing more than I was prepared for. It was clear to me that this was not a mere hallucination. This wasn't a waver of visual perception or an aura. This was a real living energy that was embedded in life itself. I've never seen anything in this world that has led me to believe that within a physical reality there exists the same perfection. To be capable of such a pure and innocent expression of human identity in relation to the fabric of existence filled my heart and my imagination with a miracle of life that I had never truly known. This was what it was to experience life to the greatest degree of joy. This was what it was to be the human being and what it was to rejoice in the naked mind of being alive. But I had a very serious problem. I was not of a life in this world that allowed me the right to talk about the oneness of the universe. Yet I had

stumbled upon it in an electrical storm of brain activity. It was going to take me down a painful road of adaptation before I was able to unite this vision with my world. And I was going to have to earn it in the eyes of others. This was going to be a task that required the strength of sustaining my mind in the pressure of the ocean floor.



Later that night as I slept the current attacked my central nervous system once more. I awoke to conscious thought, as I tasted the brilliance of the sun again. Before me in blazing glory spun the wheel as I was mesmerized with a wonder of over stimulation. This was a little too much for one day. I opened a cosmic vault as the secrets of

my soul were being transmitted in a psychical computer of elegant joy. The wheel appeared the same only spinning with a speed much faster than the previous vision. It was impossible to make out any of the signs. This time the signs didn't seem to carry any importance. What was in the center of the wheel was what bore the weight of the mystery. An old woman stood before me. She was thin with long flowing white hair. Her clothing was modest as she wore a long mustard colored dress. She stood in a small room very reminiscent of the bedroom that I had at the time. I could make out a dresser, but that was all. What was in the room didn't concern me. The old woman stood as she smiled gracefully at me. She was very warm and inviting as if she had been watching over me my entire life protecting me with a force of divine fortune. Without thinking I had a sexual impulse. There was also a desire for the comforting bliss of warmth and security in the suckling of infancy. It was an unusual combination that I had never known but it came naturally as a feeling of delight that drew me to her. She felt the telepathy of my mind and proceeded to remove her blouse revealing her breast. At the time I didn't know why I had this feeling but as soon as she complied the vision faded and I drifted back into sleep. I knew there was something unusual about my thought process during this vision. The old woman and myself seemed to be related in some way. As if she was an old and wise great grandmother who had visited me from the dead. She definitely had something to tell me. It couldn't have been that she traveled through space and time just to show me her breast.

Or perhaps that was the message. There is no greater warmth in this world than being that of a newborn in the radiant sun of a mother's bosom. I had just regressed into the innocent heart of infancy where my sexuality was still alive. And the problem with all of this was that I was expected to be on the verge of becoming a man. I had been exposed to a realm of a stainless mind when I came from one that was filthy with the disease of situation. I had just partaken of a baptism that was wired in the electricity of a neural network. The feminine deity had spoken in a colossal schema of lucidity that established her as a breathtaking reality in her place among the gods. As humans we walk the earth oblivious to the higher life forms that surround us as if we are ants who only understand the basic functions of a primary protocol in our daily lives. Encounters with these life forms are produced in the mysteries of the mind as we boggle in our understanding of them. But it was clear that she asked of me to return to the world with a brilliant sunburn.

My first impulse upon receiving this scorch of empyrean coronation was to tell people about the glory of the spinning wheel. My words have always fallen short of the majesty that spun the pulsating blood of reality through the veins of a breathing perfection. This is where the unsettling curse in the strenuous filters of communication joined with the even more frustrating confines of my terrestrial identity. I was not one who made the regression to matter with an ease of fitting into the shoes of an archaic form that only served to diminish me in life. It was similar in analogy to reducing to

a lower life form such as an animal. Somehow I had to make the faculties of a beast speak the essence of perfection. I had to teach this often-ravaging monkey that I found myself in to talk with an eloquence that was expressive in conveying the dynamics of being. As I had always known primates do not have the aptitude for speech, never mind the even flow of an instrumental tongue. I had a feverish road of exhaustion in the task of miracles to perform as I acquainted myself once again with this sluggish creature of flesh and blood.

The first person I told was my brother. He was not very receptive because of the incident when I informed on him. There was a great distance between us. But he was the closest person I knew to share a philosophical mind. I imagined his own experiences with LSD in the absorption of celestial light had developed his scope of reality into a degree of reflection. He didn't understand what I was talking about and it seemed unusual to him and wildly eccentric as if I was telling him that aliens had just abducted me. Something so implausible could only be a sign of madness in which my imagination had taken me hostage as an attempt to get attention. The curse of this vision was violent in its accentuation of my alienation. This was the most devastating part of regressing back to material existence. No one believed that the brain was capable of operating on a level that introduced the perfection of its own capabilities in a breathing arrangement of the highest order. Or even more so most people didn't want to believe that this fool had such a sight of transcendence that my own truth was greater than their own. But as foolish as I appeared

to be my neurology was in fact the precision of the *Pinball Wizard.* I had no distractions when I played the silver ball of my own neural network. But I wasn't going to find many people who believed in miracles outside the realm of their own world. For some people the only way there was to truly prove that this was a real experience was to risk everything for it. I didn't imagine that I had to do that and I was sure to find someone who believed, but it was going to be difficult to sleep in the desert of skepticism. The agony of disbelief is enough to begin an inquisition into your own integrity. It can fester to a point of not recognizing your own reflection. In this world this vision was something that was designed for the faucets of expression. The running waters of this not only had to be creative in order to entice and inspire, but they had to be potent with the endgame of reality. I hadn't yet taught this monkey the graceful articulation of capturing this conception. Though my brother was taken back by my extravagant claim he did share with me a book that he was reading on meditation, which I digested rather quickly.

The next person I told was my mother. I had not been close with my mother for years. I knew she had an interest in lucid dreams as she often told my brothers and I about them. She even talked about a few out of body experiences. On one occasion she traveled out of her body towards the ceiling as saints beckoned her. Surely my mother was the one to talk to. I bought her a book on lucid dreaming and we went for a long drive to talk about things and reunite our relationship. This seemed very natural after I had already displayed my affections

for the feminine energy of my inner world. It appeared so intuitive to me as though I was following a grand play of predestined causes and effects. I had found the molten lava of life flowing into the ocean shores of my individuality. I was the lightning in the impossibilities of a mysterious dream that walked a line between the shadows. My androgyny was a work of art that I freely sculpted and it was what brought this archaic form to the Milky Way of creativity. My mother still had a great influence over my development and I was very much like her in my creative mind and intuition. She has what some might call a direct line with God and her belief system is impenetrable. A strange bond began to develop between my mother and myself and I suspected that she was relevant to the vision of the old woman. I was only seventeen and didn't understand the significance of a feminine deity and the dynamic role that it played in my psychological makeup. But this was definitely a mystery worth solving and I needed my mother's help. Actually what I needed was someone who could explain the metaphysics of my mind because I was overwhelmed with a tidal wave of purpose and meaning. My encounters with these enormous schemas of divinity left me very much like a child in my understanding of the world. They were so grand in amazement that I had regressed to the innocent wonders of childhood. This was a frightening aspect of the curse that had crowned me in the regression to material existence. This was going to teach me about the pendulum of humility. When I told my mother about the visions she didn't fully comprehend what had suddenly happened to me that I was so full of a

joyous light. She believed me, but the garden hose of communication held back the ocean of what was in my mind. And she had always known me to be a hell raiser. My personality had been evolving in this direction. But when I opened the door unto the realization of myself I found an expression that needed to be articulated in a dramatic change. And that change made her question many things about me. But my mother was often synchronized with the mysteries of the dead. She told me about a prophetic dream that she had. She was in a small log cabin in the seclusion of the country. She stood in a room of the cabin that had little furnishings and was haunted by an elderly woman dressed very modestly. The women took my mother over to a wooden chest on the floor. On the wall was a window that showed a wilderness of pine trees. My mother told me that there was a strong relation in the dream as though she was a grandmother. The woman said to my mother, "Come with me I have something for you." Then she reached into the chest and pulled out a package wrapped in brown paper and tied with string. She gave the package to my mother and said, "This is a gift for you and Jon." My mother told me the dream seemed to relate to our heritage. I thought it was a bizarre occurrence of synchronicity. This was something that was going to establish an inner world of submergence where dreams interweaved in the plays of situation. Had I a working knowledge of the maddening mixtures between dreams and circumstance I might not have welcomed them so freely. But my unconscious mind had a

rushing river of plans for me that I didn't necessarily need to understand just yet.

Much later in life I took a philosophy class at a nearby college and came across Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*. It reminded me so much of my experience: to be led out of the cave of illusion where people judge the shadows as reality; then to be turned around and confronted with the true light, the source of all the shadows of illusion. In the light are Plato's forms, which are the essences of all things that exist. In Plato's philosophy every object in reality has a form that carries the weight of that object's properties. There are many different apples in existence and they all are unique to themselves, but they all come of the same form that they are patterned after. This essence is an object of perfection that can only be known in the ultimate good of existence. It's not something that can be seen in a material world. I thought of the forms as the signs spinning inside of the layers and I speculated that each sign represented the essence of an image that was projected in the center of the spinning wheel. With a combination of different signs synchronizing in the acceleration of the wheel as it spun it appeared to me that objects of reality where created in much the same way as a computer simulates a virtual reality. The schema was code for the graphics of the mind. I was questionable about one thing. It appeared to me without a doubt that this was a gateway that produced dreams. On the other hand I had to account for the substances of physical reality. The pure power that accompanied this vision led me to believe that it was synthesizing my external world.

I read through Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* with amazement. He went on to explain that someone who returned from such enlightenment back to the illusions of the cave would be mocked for having been so blinded. The brilliant light from the experience transformed the slave who had seen the light into the stupidity of a blundering fool. And he'd have to adjust to the dimmer light of the cave in order to once again be able to judge the shadows where humanity revels in societal construction and material existence. Unfortunately I did not study Plato's work at the time of my vision and I was in no way shape or form equipped to enter that cave in the development of what had become an overwhelming child complex. My outward appearance and my actions were not reflective of this curse, but my naivety of the world was a thick haze of poisonous gases. The world was a far cry from the framework of joy and it was only a matter of time before I reacquainted myself with the thick tar of hatred that filled the hearts of men.

Plato's writing was extraordinary and poetically profound in orchestrating the dynamics of enlightenment. This was a man who had a vision that survived through the ugly stains of the cavernous centuries. He was someone who spoke the language of the aliens as though he had partaken in the Last Supper of an abduction. Whether Socrates existed or was a character his trail and death was a lesson in this language of extraterrestrial citizenship. And Plato harnessed his left-brain in a beautiful unfolding of words that skillfully symbolized the right brain process of enlightenment. He could articulate in the

constricting and clumsy craft of words so eloquently everything that I experienced in the whirlwind of my own world as a result of neurological capacity. I wasn't dominantly analytical at the time of my vision. I blended more in the unusually devoted liquid of an eastern world understanding that fell in love with meditation and could realize the joys of samadhi. There was no need to dissect with the devices of a western world education. At least there wasn't going to be a need until I found myself in the penal colony of this crazy society that painted reality in the extroversion of language. I had an unusually strong right brain that in fact had realized in a moment of pure exhilaration its full potential, but I wasn't much of a thinker in terms of categorizing with language. Thought in its linguistic form was always forced in my conscience and never flowed as the fluent language of my nonverbal brain. My left brain was always overwhelmed in a bizarre handicap. Any mental activity that occurred in my mind that was of any intellectual value was in a non-verbal format. From this one short story of Plato's I understood more clearly why there were so many trials and tribulations that I faced in life. I had regressed from my right brain's operation of perfection in the spinning dynamics of being only to find myself in a left brain dominant society. The world that I had always known was formal in the systemization of people as numbers that hoarded in the hives of a meaningless progress. People lived out their entire lives as servants to the construction of caves. In my own creativity it has never been a question of me being so gifted as it was always a matter of the world

being so gray. And all I ever wanted to do after this experience was paint the wall of shadows with brilliant yellows and poetic gold. But I was greatly impaired in my ability to revert back to the black and white shades of this cave we call society. To be part of this construction of a political existence that binds each of us to earth seemed so irrelevant that I thought myself in the rainbow of the atmosphere. I forgot to pay particular attention to the proceeding of my life as I continually inhaled the afterglow from the broadcasts of a quasar.

The experience of this vision spinning in the cosmic order of exquisite joy was and still remains the greatest feat of conceptualizing my relation to something greater than myself. I had an idea that there was a higher power, but to experience it in a synergy of embracing the naked flesh of supersensory celebration was climatic enough to make my life complete. The abnormality was that I was much to young to have feasted in the fulfillment of existence. It had to have been a morsel in my mouth and as being such I still had so much to learn. But as it was at the time there was no better taste then the wine of blood that for just a moment revealed to me the divinity within myself. The arduous task in life was to live up to it. And that was going to prove to be painfully difficult. Neil Armstrong can say that he walked on the moon, but I wouldn't trade experiences with him. I later learned that the current that I felt through my body was a result of sleep paralysis. This is when the body falls asleep but the mind remains alert. A neurologist told me that the images that I saw during

my sleep paralysis are called hypnogogic hallucinations. I was going to experience this more in my life. Sometimes I experienced only the paralysis. Other time's hallucinations followed. But I understand that in scientific research there is a strong tendency to diminish phenomena in explanations that are not truly befitting. The wonder of a child's smile can be broken down into the dynamics of muscular activity in response to stimuli. Science is in desperate need of a spiritual awakening. I think that might make life worth living for all of us. I'm not in doubt about the neurology of the experience. But I think that categorizing this as a hypnogogic hallucination understates the factual form of it in a tremendous definition of simplicity. In my own scientific mind I can conclude with accuracy that if anything this vision is the dream weaver that spawns the fibers of hallucinations. Science is capable of merging with a celestial realm in being more than a dry method of explanations that only prove the absurdity of a meaningless life. Or at least it works that way for those of us who have been touched with a mesmerizing blizzard of a glistening virgin snow. It seems absurd, but the creation of a fictional pattern such as the *Flux Capacitator* in the movie *Back to the Future* is illustrative of actual designs which can be brought forth onto the frontiers of knowledge. I've even read that Einstein had a dream in his youth in which he sled down a hill unto a sky filled with mathematical equations. And from what I know he based his entire scientific career on this one dream. A dream in its power of celestial motion as a gathering of angels where the harps play their strings of the mind's

capacity for revelation was the birth of E=MC2. Our brains are warehouses of astonishing divinities that can explode in the joy of the imagination upon the shallow of our mind. The scientist taps into the power of immaculate thought just as the artist, the poet, and the musician. The potential of the divine to construct the many colored cloths of existence is unlimited. And the philosopher weaves the marriage of them all in a brilliant orgy.

Shortly after I had been beckoned into the laughing lightning of a gentle and exuberant madness there were a few things that began to develop in my life. These were the works of photographs that I was laboring on in the dark room of my future. I was not fully aware of the images that were generating before me as I worked unavoidably to bring back my vision of a societal construction. Still in a state of childlike wonder I felt the penetrating cleansing of the goddess. The world of perception as it appeared after the introduction of a pure energy of joy became a Wonder Land of sensory information. This established an identity of Alice in the perplexities of a psychedelic world that was bizarre with shadows. I found myself sharing feelings with people that were new to me, which exposed the passionate love affair of a virgin's newly found devotion to his feminine nature. Z came to me in a dashing entrance of fusing this love with the world and suddenly seeing it develop in the photograph of my future. He was a few years older than me and I knew him to be gifted with a sensitively surreal intellect. We knew of each other from the past in previous conversations that were held before my washing onto the

shores of a mysterious reality. He often hung out with my brother and in school he was one of the more unusual burnouts who made a sudden transformation of conformity. But within that conservative persona there was the wilderness of an old soul that spread him far too thin. This haunting touch of an old soldier that had survived the psychical battlegrounds of intoxication was exactly what the doctor ordered to help Alice on her way to rediscovering the reality of society. The adoration of Z did not only involve him as a mentor, but it went further than his mind. He had a strong build, which was very toned. His hair was jet black and he had a Greek chin that brought his profile to a stunning closure of strength. He often dressed in black as if he was carrying the depth of his past and in a way he reminded me of Bono from U2. My parents often asked me if he was gay as they were very perplexed about this young man. "Z is not gay." I laughed. Yet I was troubled by vivid dreams in which he confessed to me that he was. Other than my grandfather Z was the first man to discuss intimate details about life with me. He wanted to know everything about me. His father was a very successful businessman who grew up on the street. Z was not like his father though and often presented a delicate nature that was firm in confidence. I found him an intricate puzzle of many layers that resolved one picture at a time as he wished me to see. On the other hand I was a puzzle that overflowed with a flowering that left me exposed with the foolish heart of an imbecile. Such was the curse that left me to dangle in the ruins of my own life with a brilliant sunburn. The deadly depression of returning to my

life was not something that I was prepared for. There came a great feeling of inferiority that accompanied my walks with Z on the path of adjusting to my life situation. This was often reinforced by a new nickname as he religiously referred to me as the Putz because of the extreme naivety of my bleeding heart. I became branded very quickly as an individual who was not equipped to deal with life situations. My dependence on the relationship with Z only went to prove that I was indeed the putz he thought me to be. But I was so overcome with a need to solve the riddle of this person who had befriended me. I knew in my heart that there was a reason why I returned to this world. And deep down I knew I had some very painful lessons to learn in acquiring the permanent splendor of joy that awaited me at the end of my road. My mind had become so weakened with awe over my use of LSD that I was drawn into the darker corners of Z's occasionally frightening mind. He was an unusual blend of a ruthless Hitler and a compassionate Christ who looked down on the toys of my mind as his projects. We usually went for picnics in the park, or to the beach. We danced around the sexual undercurrents of the friendship. I wasn't able to face my own bisexuality. To discover these desires with someone who may have been bisexual himself would have been weird for me. Growing up I had a world of fantasies that involved other boys of my age. But they were so repressed that even I didn't acknowledge them as having been a part of my psyche. I was taught they were meant to be in a form of fantasy that never crossed the line into actual intimacy. There was a very valid reason why I felt so

passionately in my mind about sharing affections with someone of the same gender. And that was simply because young males were easier to get close to then girls of my age. It was odd to encounter Z who seemed to have shared the same philosophy. But now it was the intensity of a pleasure that had been building since puberty in a forbidden dance of raw sexuality. This just didn't happen to someone who was raised Catholic. Which was all the more reason for it to have been so desirable. The structure of my mind as it had been raised in a repressed environment did not know how to deal with this type of situation. If I was a computer I was continually malfunctioning. I wasn't ready for the kind of relationship that mirrored its own reproduction organs. Though I was certain it was something that would have electrified the hidden rooms of fancy that littered my psyche in what could have been an eruption of carnal luxury.

The sexual tension was not the only line of code that threw my program for a loop. Z was devastating in his psychological relation to me as though he was working at a psychiatric hospital. He had an intelligence that went as far as to root out childhood experiences in the causes of behavior. And he fancied himself a practitioner of the mind with the God complex of his superior intellect in the love affair of heaven and hell. His incessant need to pry into my past worried me for the simple reason that I didn't pry into my own past. I never before talked deeply with anyone about anything, other than my grandfather. And with my grandfather I mostly listened. My social

skills were severely underdeveloped and I had not yet built my life in the palace of memory that instituted my own experiences. I never bothered to reel in the years and never thought it was a necessity. The child in me had never died and I never imagined he had to. The key to immortality was nourishing the young boy with the vibrancy of inner beauty. But that was about to unfold into the nightmares that capture childhood in the imagination that must sleep with the lights on. My conversations with Z were often about our feelings and my uncertain adjustment into the cohesion of an adult world where I was expected to live in the grave as everyone else. This was a transition in life that I had not been prepared for or educated enough about to suddenly abandon the beauty of Plato for the ugly face of the cave.

Z was a master of his craft in the flying broom of the mind as it pertained to deep communication. His understanding of my mindset was of a personal knowledge to him that had me suspecting his sorcery of telepathy. He was sensitive to dreams and their meanings. He knew the power of symbols and often talked in riddles and communicated subliminally. He was fluent in the schemas that enveloped the mind in wisdom from the jungles of the street to the conscience of cosmic ordering, which he recognized in me. In his room was a poster of Albert Einstein. Unlike myself who went for emotional and visual stimulation in a sweeping dance of femininity while on LSD, Z used to hold in depth conversations with Einstein. His mastery of verbal arrangements often confused and at times

frightened me. At times he was a madman in the peculiarity of a tongue that had been dipped in the lava of a melting reality.

When I began to hang around with Z people came out of the woodwork in what was an unusual re-acquaintance with the cave I once knew. I remember Red approaching me in the light of Lucifer as he beckoned me to join him in the entourage of intoxication. Melon Head was another to bring forth the pleasures of numbing my mind. I thought nothing of talking with them again as I had been so blinded by an entity that washed my mind in the reincarnation of myself. I didn't head the warning that the detective gave me. I didn't listen to Z when he told me that Red was not always going to be there for me. It was never apparent to me why I returned and it's still hard for me to explain now. I had isolated for some time and my involvement in a social setting was handicapped in my inability to discover a new group of people. There were not avenues that I could explore in building my life again. My mother tried to persuade me to join the military, but I was far from that rugged form of material that stood at attention in the face of dehumanizing growls. The friends I had in high school were the social construction of the only world I ever knew. Hanging out seemed harmless enough and my social life had run so dry that I never imagined I was going to be part of a belonging again. In my mind I was the Zeus of inner workings, but in my character I was the fool who wasn't going to know the street until my face smashed into it. There wasn't much else for me to do with my life as I saw it at the time. I had little direction from people and even

my grandfather was growling at me to give my life to my country. It wasn't an option that I was able to handle in the sensitivity of my mind. Getting a job never occurred to me as something that I could actually do. I wasn't qualified to do anything but wash dishes or pump gas. There are not any jobs available to people that encounter creation and the working world of fine art is as flighty as a feather in the currents of a tornado. I felt at the time that I was too disheveled in the results of my abuse to work anyway. I don't know how I was going to be able to handle the work place with a mind as inexperienced in almost every degree of life as my own. My soul was ancient in the wisdom of eternal life, but my mind, be it as absorbent as it was to cosmic influence thought among the things that grip us in childhood. That wasn't what employers looked for and to even get a job was going to take a miracle. Going back to high school was out of the question. There were too many distractions that hindered the learning process in what were the rudimentary disciplines that didn't seem to appeal to me anyway. Rebuilding my relationships with my parents was not as important to me as maintaining the highs that I imagined were going to last a lifetime. I didn't have an interest in my art as something that I could actually have nurtured into the blossoming flower of my future. I wish that at the time I had enough sense to immerse myself in creation and establish that as the security of my individuality in not having the need for negative relations. But I was too young and too naïve in my understanding of life to do anything but throw it away. Other than having an extraordinary

vision, which spellbound me in the gathering of angels, there wasn't much to my life that was of value to me as I stumbled blindly into the Dark Ages of going nowhere. Doing anything other than generating the disease of my brain in the numbing of a dead world seemed like a waste of time.

The time I spent between Z and the others grew into a deeper shade of haze. My eyes were still flickering in the light of candles that swayed in the wind of what was to become a certain reality. I was always in a psychedelic state that had been the aftermath in my use of LSD. Life seemed to be drifting as it was in the beginnings of my abuse when there was nothing to hold onto but the moment. It was the moment itself that allured me as my abuse captured that capsule in time that worked the reality of now. I was always oblivious to the world in the delight of a synchronizing that radiated within me. Nothing ever happened that was more significant than the simple pleasures of messaging my mind and the womb of my existence was warm in a moment that floated through the days.

This would soon change when one day my mother came to me as I doodled in the safety of my mind and told me that the high school had caught fire. Part of me was excited as if the great Satan of the few jackasses that worked there had been struck in the testicles of their livelihood. It was an initial emotional response that was brought about by my disappointment in the school. I wasn't fond of the time I spent there and it had been almost as excruciating as a meet factory. As I am today I'd never take pleasure in the destruction of anything

and it bothers me now that I then thought it to be something to rejoice. As littered with authority figures that were often inhuman and insensitive to my immaturity as I was in high school there were also many members of the faculty that were good people. They didn't deserve the disruption of their professions, as was their job to guide the students that actually cared about their education. I initially suspected the tragedy to be an accident of some sort. School was not in session and I knew that no one was going to be caught in the blaze. Apart from my immediate arousal of seeing those few careers go up in smoke I simply wanted to know what was going on. I walked up to the school and found a large crowd that was as curious as me, but didn't see any fire or even smoke. It was a student that revealed to me that it was in the back of the school. There wasn't much to see and no one I really wanted to talk to so I headed home. I thought nothing more of it and it didn't seem to be remarkable in the scope of my often-dizzy and oblivious reality of angels and sirens. I had so vanquished myself in a feast of light and elastic realms that stretched into the heights of falling from the heavens and landing on the backs of butterflies. But what I had so easily forgotten was that there was another reality and it was archaic to my own with the drudges of dungeons. I had removed myself in such a contrast of ease that dissolved the cement fixtures of living in a world with death. The constructions of shadows were going to morph among the walls in their ability to strangle my eyes in the Stone Age of survival.

About a week later the rubber-tongued devil of alphabetic closure came to my house with the newspaper. Z was in a mood that had been electrified with the surprise of current events. "Look at this!" He said as he force-fed the folded faces to me. On the front page in the starving appetite of the state's blood thirst for justice in the news were three people that I knew from high school. I had known all of them from my days of rummaging through the streets and aggravated assaults amidst the chaos of my town. They were not part of the group that I was with but another circle that congregated on the same street. All of them were in court being charged with arson. I was in disbelief. I couldn't tear myself away from the sight of tears that were forming in one of the student's eyes. I could only imagine how he was witnessing his life being judged in a fury that was going to send him to the beatings and rapes of reality that transpire in prison. I'll never forget that look of anguish in the face of a justice that served only to violently rip and tear the limbs of a young man's soul in the wasteland of sinister time. How with one mistake of even being among the group his life had been condemned to the molestation of men that were going to teach him the painful truth about playing with fire. I kept looking at Z and then back at the paper trying to grasp the severity of their actions. To this day I still don't know what possessed them. I didn't want to know. I distanced myself from anything relating to the incident. I was no longer a part of anything that erupted as a result of what these people took part in. I didn't want to occupy my time thinking about it. I felt so sorry for

the student that had almost broken down into tears and I knew he didn't belong with the others. Also I knew him better in high school than I did the others. It really wasn't my problem. But my insurmountable empathy was already so involved that I couldn't escape the tragic fall from grace of that one student. Something like this was much too real for me to see someone that I knew suddenly subjected to the tortures that take place in the dingy dens of animals. Z began to tell me about another student that was involved who turned over states evidence. He talked about him as though someone should put a hit on him and that was to become the general consensus wherever I went. The painful lesson that I was to learn from this was that my life among people who had been associates of these students was going to uproar in the wake of my own past as having once been involved in an incident of informing. This was a time for a drastic change of environment and lifestyle but I was too confused in my psychedelic delirium to recognize it.

I had spent a fair amount of time soaking in the washing machine of LSD. My own memory of being in a situation that was similar to the events of the high school burning down had almost become segregated to a room in my mind that was locked forever. I chose not to remember it as I left that room to the dust of the dead. Memory can be a very delicate drawer of personal possessions that weave the fragments of reality when you play with the potency of hallucinogenics. There are things in that drawer that can attack like werewolves in the madness of the moon when they are aligned with

the appropriate situations. They can become grizzly rapes against the minds of those that have been transformed in the energy fields of feathers that are characteristic of the ethereal caresses of substance abuse. My own mind was structured in the fragility of an alternate reality where memory was never a ghost, but a former life that had vanished in the air. The severity of my own experience had long past in its significance as yesterday's news. But now the haunting of that safeguarded drawer that paved the road of my past had begun, as it was relevant to a situation that burned a fire of consequence in my conscience. Being a rat as they say was now hated so violently that it was time to weed out the worthless in their ridiculous relation to the street. The student who got away with burning the high school down by turning over states evidence was often talked about. I was often made aware of the threats to kill him and his family. Every time his name was mentioned or the event of the high school burning down was brought up I felt a deep connection as having once been myself in a position of informing. My trip on LSD within the rubber reality of uncontrolled anxiety was what always surfaced when the event was brought to my attention. It wasn't something that integrated cohesively within my mind as I had been in a banquet of pillows that cushioned my construction of the world. Since we often smoked pot this anxiety and paranoia grew to alarming levels. This period of my life I can clearly say was when I developed my anxiety disorder. It was also the point in my life where I began to cultivate delusions based on the paranoia that I encountered. These delusions became the

final episodes of fantasy that were all too real possibilities of a life that foolishly clang to its youth. It all happened so quickly and violently that I never had a chance to recognize my situation as being as dangerous as it actually was. Or at least I wasn't able to make that danger stick in the glue of my conscience to a point where I was able to straighten out my life once and for all and discontinue the correspondences with my past. And it wasn't that easy to alleviate myself from these people. They were always around as they were friends of my brother and they were embedded in the network of my town. I reluctantly alternated from hanging out with Z and hanging out with Red and his minions of monsters. The hold that illegal substances had on me in what had become a great addiction of oblivion was not easy to forsake as it once had captured me in the love of life. Suddenly I had a great responsibility to clean my system and I couldn't do it. The greater confusion arose, as Z became the confidant of my paranoia and delusions. But it began to occur to me that all of my conversations with Z, deeply personal discussions, were being broadcast throughout the town. Everyone knew each other from high school and Z often spent time in cahoots with the others as well. I didn't want to believe that he would betray my confidence because of my confusing feelings for him. The heart of my relation to Z was captured in such a blinding trust that I let him hold my fears in what was an innocent intercourse.

It was natural in the sexual undercurrents of my friendship with Z that he also brought back memories in me of my incestuous desires

for my brother. He knew so much about me. Even about my hospitalization as a child. Our families knew of each other and as being such the difficulties I had growing up were knowledge to him through his parents. And something deep down in me recognized a knowledge about him that told me of his clairvoyant sight into my sexuality. Stories throughout the town began to surface about my past as desires that had been long repressed began to surface in the collective of others. I remember Z once said that he was worried about my youngest brother as if I was a child molester. A sudden chill came over me. I couldn't imagine someone thinking that of me and it was frightening. I didn't ask him about his concern. I didn't want to know. But people often laughed at me and I began to realize it for the first time. But even more so I began to realize why. Thoughts of other's suspicions began to come to me in a terrifying attack on my sexual identity. I knew I wasn't the devious form of life that they suspected and it was grueling to face the infamy that was developing in my name. The only thing I knew to do was repress the suspicions that others were forming, as though they weren't really being constructed. How do you face something like this? As was natural in puberty my sexuality was on fire, but my life never revolved around sexual appetite of any kind. It was never imperative to express my sexuality and it never seemed something that was driving my life. I certainly was not the shadowy figure of suspicion, but unfortunately this was going to become a demonic presence in my life that never had any intentions of letting up. I began to have

nightmares of the living dead, which I believe related to my life situation with these people that I couldn't escape. They came for me in the night as I walked the streets in the horror of a betraying world. I sought out those who were still alive as we hid somewhere in the abandonment of the world only for us to be overtaken by the dead. Then just as I was about to be taken into the hallow shell of my own gray matter I'd wake up. They were playing with me. The fact that I admitted to masturbation was not helpful in maintaining an aura of masculinity. There was nothing unnatural about it that portrayed me as deviant. I was among the few who actually had the courage to be honest. But my hesitation to form bonds of a sexual nature with a woman made me the but of every joke. I stayed with the group not because I enjoyed being ridiculed, but because I had a severe addiction that I could no longer control. The physical dependency on substances was not the issue. It was the psychological involvement of recapturing the innocence of youth that drugs so eloquently furnished in the reflecting pond of my psyche. But that innocence was annihilated in the grip of a group that sought punishment for the weak. The depleting addiction of drugs in the dismantling of my integrity as a human being made me feverishly believe that I needed to be punished. In the mania of my high school years I had dealt my share of shame upon the face of others. It was my turn to be humiliated and in the unnatural logic of my dizzy head I felt that they were justified. My karma had caught up with me. I fell into a deep depression that was profound with the chemical alterations of chaotic

absorption. The depression itself became centered on the ruined civilizations of death. There was a constant fear of going to prison, in which I felt that I would most certainly be raped and killed. I didn't want to believe that this was the direction that I was headed for with this crowd. But in order to redeem myself in the screwed up reasoning of addiction this was what I had to do. I had to go to prison. I didn't owe these people anything, but I was so mixed up in drugs that I didn't know what the hell I was doing. There was also an undue amount of pressure being applied to me to establish sexual relations with a woman. That was on the top of the list. But I just couldn't. I was too shy to get involved with the woman that they were trying to set me up with. My first sexual encounter was a nightmare. There were about five of us and we all brought this one girl to a motel. She was not a prostitute, but was willing to have sex with all of us. This was not the type of women that I imagined I was going to share my first time with. I was too hesitant to jump so quickly into things. They made me go first, which pounded even more pressure on me. I was so nervous, I just couldn't do it. Of course this extended the rumors of my sexuality. I was always being tested to prove my masculinity. But my qualities as a man in regards to sexual relations were rather old fashioned. With a woman I needed a bond that could be nurtured in emotion. I never found myself being acquainted with that type of woman. Whenever the subject of getting laid came up I started to have an anxiety attack and found excuses.

I had become so sensitive in the disorienting lust for drugs that to touch me with a pat on the back was to sentence me to the death of my dishevcled state. Of course I could not leave the obsession of substances as they continually promised me the succulent breasts of heaven. But all they ever delivered were the hypnotic possibilities of hell. I was too impressionable for prison. Everytime I found myself in the cryptic court of Red where his minion of Melon Head's were smashed among the gardens of marijuana I was always being tested. They were always involved in some kind of criminal activity that situated me in a position of having to extinguish the control of my addiction. And I just didn't have the strength. Whether it was selling drugs or stealing car radios they insisted that I help them out. The pressure was unbearable and I gathered as much common sense as I was capable of at the time to limit my involvement with them to a supply and demand relationship. To abandon my addiction altogether was unimaginable for me at the time. But it was clear that I was not a tough guy and I became very confused about what was going on. The delusions became more and more real as I progressed further into my dependency. The truly frightening Frankenstein that ravaged through the village of my mind was the shadowy figure of paranoia that began to stretch over into my family relations.

My parents began to openly fight with each other for the first time, which caused a great disturbance in my own security at home. They never had a good marriage as I have understood, but as my brothers and myself were growing up their disappointment with one

another was kept in the closet for the most part. My father was never abusive towards my mother, but he never treated her like a woman, as she deserved to have been showered in the praise of her femininity. My mother is an exceptional woman and she was the best thing that ever happened to him, but he never saw it. He never cared for her the way she deserved to be and he never held her on the pedestal that she belonged on. Unfortunately my father was the model that I used to relate to my mother. Throughout my life I have not given my mother the respect that she deserved. Her inability to understand me has sometimes been infuriating and at times insulting, but she is my mother and I should have always respected her despite the cold war of communication. We've had many conflicts, but she continues to be a close friend despite the grief I have caused her in my immaturity through the years. During many periods of my life we have been distant, but she has stuck by me despite the often-maddening taste of my drifting mind. I don't know of someone who is more deserving of heaven. I know the great value of having her in my life. I also know that as her son I have afforded her enough of a struggle to write her own book. She has been the fabric that has held our family together for so many years. Even in the eventual separation of my parents it has been her philosophy of love that has sown the cloth of my brothers and mine own fabric. She doesn't receive the honor that she is worthy of and I am ashamed to say that within the whirlpool of darkness that has dragged me into my addictions and illness I have not been a good son. It is because of the great sacrifices that my

mother has made that I must pay homage to her and take responsibility for my own life. It has appeared slightly unusual and even unexpected to me that in writing this book and sculpting my growth there has been an evolving realization that within a societal construction women are the figures that man is meant to serve. In getting criticism for this undertaking my audience has been predominately female. It has been the appeasing of a collective energy of femininity that has been guiding the development of my work. And as I am able to understand it is that which has offered me the augmentation that I am capable of in my individuality. The freedom of my thought to explore the hidden depths of my psyche in the healing of words could not have been comforted more than by my aunt. Of the people I have known in life it is her unending support in this project that has allowed me to unleash the great potential of my intellect as it generates in emotional strength. I know of few men who can offer me the same sympathy and understanding as that which flowers in the feminine mind. In unearthing the female deity that drenched my psyche in the kindness of my vision there has been an obligation in my mind to wash the feet of Mary Magdalene. I understand the power struggles that often occur between men and women in relationships. Especially in today's world of integrating competition where women are colonizing their abilities to perform in a man's world. As I have seen in my mother its clear to me that women have an amazing strength, which often surpasses men. Yet in my own observations through life I've never acquainted the control of

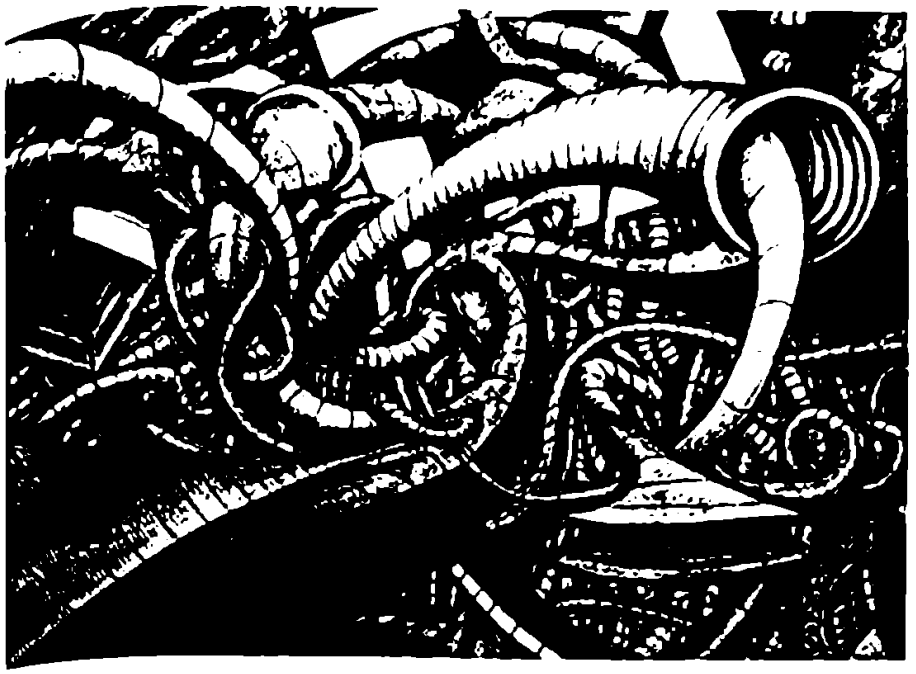
the working world with the determining factor of supremacy. More so than men the female gender is capable of a gentle-heart that pours kindness into the overflowing glass of the weary, which has been the case for me in the process of this book. I know there are men who shower the world in their gentle nature. I am one of those men in the clarity of my illness, but as I have lived and experienced women are tenderer in their decoration of reality. It is that sensitivity of the psyche that situates them in the superiority of the human race and it is that quality that I have most admired. Most women have a better understanding of the things that work within our hearts. It has always been a matter. of an instinctual inclination to seek women for the missing pieces of my own heart's puzzle. As I have been graced with a bisexual mind I've had my share of confusion throughout my life. But I also feel that I've been given a wider spectrum of masculine and feminine traits. And as I have eventually learned in life and within the metaphysics of the supernatural I am the humble servant in the courtyard of the feminine mind. That is where I depart from my father in the ways of his old fashioned wisdom. He was very much a cave man and he could never deal with my mother's strong independence. He was never capable of recognizing the importance of my mother in his life as someone that was actually his better half. At the time I realized that their marriage was a bitter battlefield of political and religious opposition. It felt so much as though there wasn't any love in my family and in the piercing feuds of fire that burned throughout the house it touched me for the first time. I became disillusioned and

this was a turn of events that I was not prepared for in the madness of my Frankenstein. Seeking solutions for the paranoia of addiction was something that I could not accomplish in the confidence of my parents. Their verging divorce was bordering on an apocalyptic end to my understanding of the family and it all erupted suddenly as though the forces of nature were furious beneath the feet of the gods. The house was always flying on the border of the end and everything was as uncertain as my life outside. The only solid ground came from my grandfather who was just as clueless as me. My father didn't talk to me. My mother was questioning my sexuality, which I suppose was a natural thing to do because I didn't date. But it wasn't a good thing for me considering that my family was not open to subjects of this nature. And it came to mark the suspicion of my sexual appetite within the family. Even if that appetite was never hungry. I was suddenly lost in the middle of a world that I no longer recognized. There were uproars of uncertainty dismantling the one safe place that I knew. The unconscious perfection of my childhood was gone and I cursed the name of God for bringing me forth onto a truth that spun disastrously in lies. My vision as I knew it in memory was swimming with the sharks of irrelevance. And so I positioned it in the far corner my life where it awaited me at the end of my journey. But I never could have imagined the venture was going to be so questioning in the terrain of concrete that scraped the flesh of my mind as I was to repeatedly blunder in the dark.

Despite my mother's nagging and despite the difficulties between my father and her she offered as much attention to me as she could. It was very apparent to her that I was struggling in a life of combustible commotion - Both inside and outside the home. I was in a thundershower of confusion with little guidance and I had approached her with a dazzling vision in the brilliance of my sunburn. My grandfather wasn't of an artistic or sensitive mind that could understand things of a psychical nature. But my mother recognized a need in me to unleash the condensed creativity of my nuclear mind. She stuck by me and pushed me to get my GED. Soon after I began studying Fine Arts at a Community College. My mother was the one who suggested this and her unfulfilled dreams of pursuing her own creative endeavors were going to be realized in me. She insisted that I take up fine arts and she knew exactly what direction to point me in. Suddenly I was disoriented with a purpose greater than that of chemical alteration. But I still had a serious problem and it was going to be a difficult matter of me following through. I took up photography with Z and a drawing class for my first semester. This was something that I enjoyed and it was hard to believe that they actually taught something so entertaining. I was studying my principal interest - something that I excelled at in the multiplication of madness. One of my teachers was very impressed with my art as I exploded my paranoia in the soft touch that caressed the adorable breasts of paper.

The initial assignment in my drawing class was a masterpiece that had been waiting to erupt from the volcano of my imagination. It had been years since I had done any type of artwork and my creative mind was soaring with the Gods of delusion as they breathed the fiery blue of the sky across the desert of my hopelessness. I was instantly recognized for the drawing that I did as though I was a movie star that had just finished a dramatic role. I was a fan of M. C. Escher. My drawing reflected that in the ebony strokes that took control of my hand as though I was the extension of the pencil. The design was supposed to be non-objective. I couldn't do something entirely void of recognizable images though. Contorted wires and hoses filled the drawing in the overflowing fantasy of my mind and my very loose ownership of it. It looked like an explosion of snakes and worms that had been slithering in the gardens of night only to be condensed into the madness of two dimensions. They were all stemming from a large cube in the background that had been a sturdy enough foundation of cement to bring forth the craft of illusion. Freud would have had a field day with the drawing. In the movie *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* they travel in a phone booth through time. They are taken on a roller coaster ride through a vast network of tubes that connect the fragments of history. The drawing resembled a network of this kind and I had been dizzying through the tunnels of my imagination trying to bring forth the place in time that had been lost in the torture of my addiction.

Like symbols drawings and paintings can be multi-layered in an onion of meaning that is not always apparent to the artist. And at the time of this drawing I was not aware of any significance that it had in my life as much as I was enjoying the process of dusting the cobwebs from the scattered brain of my contorted life. I suppose it was the complexity of emotions and the wild directions that my thoughts often took that had been magnified in the triumph of the legless lizards. My life had been at a turning point of uncertainty and decisions that were swallowing me into the tubes of indecision. Each path led to the same place where I longed to touch the concrete of my childhood stability, but which tunnel to take in my groggy gaze of sudden complexity? Which vacuum was I to allow to swallow my life as it slurped the mercury of my mind into the future? To that certain place of stability in the matrix of the womb where the entangled worms of worry could no longer feast on my brain. And was I ready for the revelations that burrowed beneath the surface of civilization in the subways of a swerving future? Whatever path I was going to succumb to in what was sure to be just as maddening as where I came from everyone loved the piece.



My teacher especially revered the work of masturbation. As I suppose now some of it may have sublimated a preoccupation with pornography in the self-satisfaction of my snakes. At the time I was dealing with repressed memories of an incestuous nature with a young man who also attracted my appetite. But the sexual preference that people didn't know was always captured by the art of female homosexuality. I could never resist the wild of women as they made a love that was so sensual it always worked my voyeurism into a frenzy that actually made me long to be a woman in another's embrace. But my sexuality, be it as broadened as it was, had always been deeply repressed in the vigor of fantasy that we come to know as the shadow of the personality. The desire in me to move beyond that

world of imagination never seemed strong enough to actually fulfill my fantasies. And I never imagined that physical contact could compensate for the potency of my imagination as was conceivably so explosive in my art. If I was seducing myself in the healing strokes of the sexual organs that erected in my mind as they exploded in joy on paper then it was the expression of sexuality that became a natural avenue in art. With that there was a freedom of wild intercourse that detonated in the dizzying directions of a phallic forest as they verged on an ejaculation that I could actually bring to life in a form that others could appreciate. And people cherished the work so much that I came upon the scene of the school in the concussion of the legless lizards.

I remember my teacher asked to see me one day in her office as she had been taken back by the potency of passion that poured through the coordination of my eyes and hands. She sat me down and asked me about my plans for the future as if I had a concept of such a thing in the shadowy tide of my growing addiction. "I don't really know." I said, as I was amazed that someone dared to take an interest in my increasingly paranoid fixation with the end of the world. "My parents are always threatening to divorce. I don't know where I am headed or what to do with my life. I thought about joining the military. I'm just not sure what I want to do with my life." I said as I had just finished a drawing that had a great potential to mark the start of a brilliant career. But no matter how hard I tried as I sat there in the presence of this impressed woman I just couldn't see it enough to

clean up my act. My eyes were so mesmerized by the aftermath and continuing reorganization of addiction as the fighter pilots of stealth bombers made their missions to disorient the government of my decaying psyche. She smiled and said, "Decisions.... Decisions." And it was a moment of decisions that I should have taken by the reins of this reckless horse and tamed him in the utter focus of creation. But my life was never within my control and I always washed with the wind as the birds carried the seeds of my soul to the next frame of moments that were to unfold. I wasn't the master of my past and I could never have been the architect of monuments that stun the world in their travels through time. As we were talking she told me that she thought that I could attend one of the countries better art schools, which happened to be located in the state. "You have the imagination." She said. "And it looks like your art is a healer." It surprised me that she was able to see that in me because it was something that I was not fully aware of. I knew I enjoyed my art as though it were a childhood friend that had grown aside me and developed a flirtatious bond of affection. But I wasn't fully aware of the healing properties that this gift actually had were I to craft my madness further into the augmentation of mental merriment. I kept what she said in the back of my mind and as was at the time my life was a bedroom that was disgusting with filth. I wasn't ready for the future just yet and even I couldn't imagine that I had one.

School had a great potential to become a pleasant distraction from the things that were bothering me. It was a place where I could take

the film of my growing insanity and develop it in my artwork like a scientist in his fixation of an abnormal brain. But things outside of school were getting too much for me in the impending war that ravaged through the third world streets of my addiction. I wasn't heavy into the type of narcotics that deteriorate the nasal passages in the dependency of the dead. And I didn't dance a fire with a spoon and a needle. It wasn't even alcohol that had me drowning in the delirium of going nuts. There was a deeply psychical addiction in the escape of substantiality that marijuana continually promised me. My experience with the drug was always enhanced in a hyper accelerated forest fire because of the sheer sensitivity of what always was a touched mind. The fact that I was able to taste the delicious design of perfection with a dripping tongue of nuclear radiation only served to prove the extraordinary capability of a mind that was actually of lace and pillows. I was always stoned and further fluffing the breasts of angels while inflaming the flesh of my psyche against the blood stained texture of a concrete confusion. I could not handle my "friendship" with Z as he was filling me with the fuel of delusion that set fire to every other relation that I had. And I knew my associates of suppliers were wasted lives that sought to dismantle the fabric of reality in the underground rules that they made up as they went along. My family was in their own hurricane that barely centered within the eye of the storm. I had a purpose in creation, but I just could not deal with life in what was the complete and utter obliteration of reality. I had no idea this was what it was going to be like as I struggled to find

just a shimmer of the integrity that was once capable of holding my personality in its place. But as my personality was it wasn't even my own. I did not have ownership of my mind and the absorption of everything that surrounded me pulled me into the four corners of the earth where my identity had been severed into pieces and buried where I could not find them. Throughout my life I have been tortured by the tragedy of not knowing who I am. In the language of the mad this is the most frightening aspect of existing. I felt misunderstood by everyone and as being in such a state that only served to confuse others about myself I was not capable of forming a self-image that I could recognize. The path that drugs took me on was as tragic as Ozzy's *Crazy Train* in what had become an identity crisis that could not have molested me more maliciously than it did. I was in disbelief of my life as though it couldn't possibly be my own. Everything and everyone were in a state of turmoil and flux that my mind was not able to organize into anything that was meaningful to existence. I needed to get away. And I needed to do so in a drastic retreat from this daylight of splitting atoms that I discovered in my identity. I got stoned out of my mind, as was always the answer to the madness of the world. It was then that I had my first full-blown nervous breakdown. The pressure of becoming a man was so immense in the ocean as it poured upon my head that I never imagined I was ever going to be equipped to manage in a world of people. I decided that I'd be better off living in the desert as a hermit as was the way of the ancient prophets. As I felt at the time a monastic life was for more

romantic than the sad situation of this society. And as I was situated here there was no safe place for me that I could evolve in. That is except for school, but I didn't have the ability to see clearly within that room of reverie. The outside distractions surrounding me in the trees of a forest had grown viscous in their transformation of walking roots. I wanted to dedicate myself to my inner world and that was just not possible here. There were too many forces pulling me apart in the directions of delusion. I had imagined that I could live off of the earth and that my instinctual ability to survive as rough as it may have been was more prepared for the reality of nature than it was for the reality of man. I wouldn't have to worry about harsh winters. It was a rash decision that was void of reason in the apocalypse of my personality. I had not worked out any of the particulars such as what I was going to do for water. None of that seemed important to me. The only thing that mattered was getting away where I could actually bring back ownership of my mind.

I actually had a job at the time working as a cashier which itself was a miracle to me. But even at work I was disillusioned with the disappointment of social interaction that sprung forth in the swollen adenoid of my addiction. I drained my bank account and made my way downtown to purchase a one-way ticket. Headed for the heart of an uncertain unknown, I planned never to return. I didn't know what was going to come from this as I was in a state of mind that was running away from itself. The depth of terror that strikes the soul in the mayhem of mental confusion that occurs during a nervous

breakdown is similar in encounter with the face of Satan. There was something profound in the evil that constituted the minds of men. I was frightened like a child who had been given to the dangerous night of a full moon where the howling had begun. I was leaving my family for the first time since my hospitalization as child. Because I was emotionally unstable, my thoughts were eradicating themselves in the fury of fear that had shaken the core of my soul. I had no idea what the hell I was doing and I was maneuvering on radar like a bat that was trying not to bounce off of the walls. My first stop was New York City. It was out of a nightmare that I couldn't have possibly dreamed in the dungeons of my own psyche. I gazed out of the bus window and in my perception saw a broken city that disregarded its own life. Homeless people filled the streets that were littered in the filth of boxes and mental illness. The urban area reminded me of an aftermath of social disintegration. It was such a cultural shock for me having lived in the suburbs for a great deal of my life. From New York I transferred onto another bus and headed for Arizona. There were many stops on the way, however I was so disheveled that I can't even remember what cities I passed through. The whole time I sat in the back of the bus and gazed out the window trying to repress my fears of what I was going to do with the suddenly rioting identity of having lost my eyes in the perception of others. Occasionally someone tried to strike up a conversation with me. But I was so far out of my depth that to talk to a stranger was as agonizing as a Spanish Inquisition into the flying fragments that were falling apart in

my mind. As I was sitting in a chair in one of the bus stations, someone who was on the bus with me noticed my ill mannered state and said, "Come on, it can't be that bad." I just looked at him in anguish as the world had eaten away that solid place within me that I once dined on in beauty. He had no idea how confused and beaten I truly felt as I had let reality slip through my fragile fingers in the onslaught of what was becoming the Biblical Revelation of mental illness. And it was all because I couldn't quit an addiction.

He was the only person who offered me sympathy in my terrified reversion to the childlike disfigurement of a breakdown. Most of the people I ran into treated me like a degenerate and most of them were the type of people that I imagined I might see on *Americas Most Wanted.* I can't say that I didn't look the part. I hadn't showered in a week. My hair was long, wavy and un-kept. I wore the same clothes the entire trip. I looked like a male prostitute headed for new territory and my manner was feminine in the child that had been confused into the part. But I wasn't concerned with my appearance. It didn't seem to matter to me. The significant reality was that the world that I had always known was coming to an end in the invasion of the living dead. I have never felt more alone in my life than when I was a stranger to myself. That is always the culminating lesson of any addiction and it was the angels that gave the lecture that deformed the plastic of my personality. But I just couldn't hear them.

By the time I reached Indiana I realized that I had made a big mistake. The weight of this was so relevant to me that I could have

walked into the traffic of the main road and laid my body down once and for all. But I imagined that as weak as my character was there was still a part of me that was worth salvaging. And it was a part of my personality that was still coherent in the integrity of cosmic order. My parents were always fond of the philosophy that everything happens for a reason. They had their own belief in the paranormal and they were not skeptical of the mysterious. There were times in my life where I just didn't understand why I was so frail in my part of this seemingly pointless play. But the principles of meaning that were instilled in me as a child had some bearing on my existence as mad as I often came to believe I was. My parents founded me in the depth of their own relation to a God that synchronized the world in an order that worked with a purpose. There was a voice in me that kept saying that the disaster of my delusions that burned my identity into the flying ashes of a phoenix did not outweigh the synthesizer of *Amazing Grace* that I kept from my childhood. I found a Western Union and called my father. He wasn't shocked that I left but he was concerned as he asked me what I wanted to do. "I'd like to come home." I said in the great shame of my collapse. He said he would wire me the money. I didn't even have enough cash left to eat and I had lost a due amount of energy during the trip in my fasting. He told me to take it easy. I hung up the phone and waited around for the cash as I panicked back and forth between the thought of returning home to the disgrace of my all too frightening fragility. As I waited I realized where I was and how far I had traveled. It wasn't just an issue of

miles as unreal as the road beneath the wheels of the Greyhound was. It was a question of sanity and throughout my life I had never experienced a moment of such weakness as to fall victim to the wretched runway that stretched a flight in the hijacking of my mind. I broke down and cried outside the Western Union as the tears spoke the tragedy of a furious lapse into the more misfortunate aspect of mental illness. People walked by and endeavored to ignore the pathetic sight, as was something that I expected of people.

When I pulled myself together and received the money I headed for the bus station and bought a ticket back home. I had to wait until later that night for the bus to arrive. This was my first encounter with missing time as though the *Twilight Zone* played an episode that it erased from my memory. I have no recollection of what I did while I waited for the bus and even today I wonder if I had stepped out of existence in such a panic of grief that I forgot to take myself with me. I do remember that later that night I stood outside the station and lingered in the rain that communicated the damp and dreary sewer of my imagination. There was a car nearby and its occupants offered to let me wait with them so long as I behaved myself. I thought it was kind enough of them to offer and I hadn't received much of the good nature that the human race is supposedly known for. I sat with them for a while and tried to present myself in a coherent manner as someone who truly wasn't an unraveling wreck of fear. It was just my luck that they lit up a joint and passed it to me. That was what got me this far in the first place, but I smoked it anyway. The woman

who was in the driver's seat asked me where I was headed and what I was doing. I told her that I was going home. She picked it up right away and asked, "Are you a run away?" I didn't want to say yes. I felt stupid and ashamed. I lied to her. I could tell she didn't believe me. I tried to explain that I was visiting relatives in Indiana. It didn't really matter. She asked me if I liked country music and then played *Hotel California* by the Eagles. It gave me the creeps and I didn't need anything subliminal in my mind as it was at the time. The song is about a man who is on the road and stops at a hotel that appears to be a beacon in the night. In this lodge he is introduced to a woman and her entourage. It turns out that they are all prisoners of this place as they are trapped by their lifestyles. In the end of the song he is never able to leave. That was just great and enough to torture the meat of my mind with pitchforks and blades. As soon as the bus arrived I quickly boarded it and headed for home.

There were a few more stops on my way back home but none were as distressing as my return to New York City. There was an all too real world within this city that had never revealed itself to me in the knowledge of suburbia. It was the middle of the night when the bus pulled into the station. It may as well have been the last stop of every lost soul that sunk beneath the surface of sanity. I had to wait a good six or seven hours for the next bus to arrive. I was stuck in the hopelessness of an environment that was crawling with the decay of life that the world so easily ignored. The weather was freezing and there were a good number of homeless people in the station sleeping

on the benches and on the floor. This was the last resort for many people who couldn't possibly hope any more in mankind. They weren't even human. They were trash that happened to be littering the station. Their lives were so worthless to the world that they could have disappeared into the thin air of nothingness and done the city a favor. I just couldn't believe that people lived like this without any hope in ever recovering from their situation. It was a brutal reality check that I never forgot. Among the many who were so down and out there were shady characters that slithered among the wreckage of lives. As I was sitting on the floor someone passed by me and said, "I'm going to get you!" Then another man came up to me and asked me to go smoke a joint with him. I think he was looking for a sexual favor. Unfortunately I was not the prostitute that I appeared to be. I told him that I didn't smoke and he seemed to be upset that I didn't go with him. I can see how people might fall through the cracks of society and end up in a tragic circumstance where their minds abandon them in the litter of the streets. If my family were not there for me I surely would have. But once they're there I don't know how they can live that way as though they see nothing but the day to day torment that drags them to death. And in the sewers of the city there is no compassion. The police made their rounds through the station, and as they did I witnessed them kick some of the homeless people that were lying on the floor. Just to wake them up. That was the harsh reality of many worlds that were once brilliant in the sun of infancy only to succumb to the erosion of the absurd. I would have

rather put a gun to my head than given way to a position that left me living in death.

When I arrived home everyone was in his or her old routine. My father expected an explanation. I couldn't tell him the real reasons that suffocated my soul. I wasn't even aware of why I was so mad. All I knew was that I didn't recognize myself and I didn't know what happened to the mirror that once sat upon the bureau of drawers that so eloquently organized my life in cosmology. My clothes were scattered about the room of my mind and I wasn't even sure what I was wearing. It's not easy to ask someone to explain who you are and I knew how ridiculous it was to expect him to know. Instead I told him that someone had come into my work and threatened me, which was true. But not the trigger that sent me on my way. It was all so confusing to me as though I just crossed over into the body of another person. I didn't know what to say. For the first time in my life I was entangled in a paranoia that concerned everyone and everything. The lapse into the nightmare as a result of having been so manic was something that strangled me by the gentle tissue of my psyche as it tossed my identity about the realities that I imagined in everyone else's eyes. My own eyes had worn out their welcome in the surface of the sun and it was growing increasingly difficult to trust anyone with anything.

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I slowly learned how he pranced through the halls of his own hypocrisy by instilling the damnation of guilt, which the Catholic faith is so famous for. My mother who herself was once a nun never burdened me with the fury of an elitist disposition as did my father. My father had many difficulties with life and I love him because I can understand how grueling the conditions of the world are in shaping us. I know that in his heart he is adherent to the philosophy of love that was established by Christ. But he was never truly of a life that allowed him the superiority of spirituality that he often thought he could hold above my head. He was always trying to sway me towards Christ and persistent about the salvation of my soul in the impending need to go to confession. My brothers were not burdened with this gridiron of guilt that my father repeatedly played in the Super Bowl of my salvation. He had his own confessions to make. I was weary of opening up to him and I was more than concerned about dedicating my life to the God of the Catholics, which was always my father's plan for me. My impression of God was not the father. The matrix of my first vision held the components of androgyny. And then there was the blinding sun of a female ancestry that resided in the preexistence of my psyche as a guide that spun the fabric of the fantastic. But in my need to touch the reality of another life in finding the elixir of my madness I opened up to him as much as I could. I sensed that he was truly concerned about me and I know that he cared about my failing mind at that point in time. After a long talk he prayed over me. It was a nice moment to share with my father but of

the moment being religious in nature I was never able to fully share in the sincerity of prayer with another. It was a moment that he wished he could have shared with his father as having been abused for so many years. Even later in life my father longed to have a relationship with my grandfather, but the jackass never wanted him as a son. My grandfather was the root of a due amount of evil that rippled through the years. The moment did touch me and I never felt closer to my father, but it didn't work in the miracle of Christ's hands upon my head. There was not going to be any quick fix to what was germinating in the demonology of mental deterioration that slowly split the atoms of my identity.

A few family members made comments when I returned. After speaking briefly with one of my uncles he asked me if I had learned anything. I said, "Not really." Then he said, "Next time bring some money for food." Words of wisdom from a simpleton and an asshole who could have cared less if I returned or not. My mother told me that she was proud of me for having left on my own. I guess she didn't know what else to say and she was often frigid in my relation to her. My father told me that she cried when I was gone, but the heart to hearts had been abolished between her and I. She didn't know how to be comforting. I could hardly imagine that she was proud of me. One of my brothers came up to me and said that no matter who was threatening me that my other brother and him would defend me. I thought it was a nice gesture. However, they never could have been able to protect me from the enemies of my

imagination that were stalking me through the subways of my mind. It seemed to me that my other brother was one who wasn't going to have been on my side anyway. His friends were much more important to him and being part of that group that often dismantled me in ridicule was a life that he wasn't willing to leave. I just looked at him and said, "You don't understand." I think he was very confused about what was going on with me as was everyone else. But being younger, I think it affected him more than the others. I felt horrible that the tragedy of my addictions had hurt him in such a way as to confuse him about the reality of what was a mental illness. Of course he was the one I felt a strong attraction to. I very well could not explain to him that the guilt of those feelings in a reoccurring perception of myself as someone that I didn't know was part of the rash decision to leave. My other brother only had one question for me, "Why Arizona?" He didn't seem to care about why I had left. I think it was probably apparent to him as he knew more than anyone else about the misfortune of my life situation. When I got back I just couldn't refrain from the life that had me so addicted in the madness of never ending my agony. I called Red, the great Satan that had been the one to introduce me to the can of worms that I could not stop feasting on. I told him that I had taken off. "God! I will never let you watch my kid!" He said. I can't say that I wasn't confused and surprised by his comment. I didn't bother to ask what he meant. But the talk around town had the proof it needed to further involve me in the role of a man that I didn't know.

The next day was Thanksgiving and I was more than worried about being among my family after my breakdown. Everyone came over to eat and it surely wasn't the same as many years past that were perfected in the harmony of a kindred spirit. As I was sitting with my cousins one of them blurted out, "Maybe he likes little boys!" In response another cousin told her to shut up as she obviously stepped out of her bounds and had no right being so malicious. "Was she talking about me?" I thought. I assumed she was, but I didn't say anything and all I wanted to do was pretend I didn't hear it. If I were truly the deviant monster she thought I was I would have already molested someone. But even with my brother I never annoyed him to a point that was descriptive of my identity as this horrid thing that people thought to punish in humiliation. It was a desire that I grew out of and I lost it in the days of my pubescent purgatory. Upon the course of my life I never had the motive of molestation in my potential, and I certainly never deserved to be thought of as someone who did. But unfortunately there were a few whimsical members of the world that thought differently in the desire to exercise the superiority of their own moral fabric. As is in America the true judges that dwell in justice come from the courts of an underground where it is the suspicion of ones makeup that sends the jury to deliberate without cause. That is the way of the world and why many people I encountered were not worth the effort of getting to know. The family didn't understand why I had left and like my cousin and my uncle I felt many of them didn't give a shit. I imagined I was still as lost as

the male prostitute that people thought I was when I was on the entrails of the road. My grandparents assumed that I had been using them. It was all about how bad a person I was. I really didn't need to come home to that but that was the disgrace of having a nervous breakdown. And that was what I had to face rather than the littered desperation of being lost in the bowels of a homeless life.

A few days went by and it was all forgotten as even I returned to life and made my way back to work in the shame of my departure. Everyone knew that I had malfunctioned and I had to face the humiliation of an individual that was not capable of handling the hot iron of life. The trip wasn't mentioned in my presence anymore but it was molten in the unspoken volcano that held a hidden perception of me. In my family no more questions were asked and it was considered a flight of fancy that was an anomaly in the sudden attempt to escape from the torment of my mind. No one gave the glue of thought to the impending demise of a failing mental health as a motive for the downward spiral of my unfamiliar face. It was a spur of the moment thing, as though I had suddenly been a person that no one ever knew. It even took myself by the surprise of a sensational excursion. It was a terrifying meltdown of my nuclear reactor of reality. But it should have been a clue that I was in need of serious professional help. The understanding of mental illness in my family was as uneducated as the kindergarten of the early asylums where a patient's life was over upon diagnosis. Whether they didn't want to face it or they could just not make a cohesive perception of my

defecting personality no one took concern. They were all too busy in their own lives and I was expected to be busy building mine.

A few days after the all to grueling feast of turkey and suspicion that shriveled my soul in the thanks of giving that even the homeless were not lucky enough to have I made a call. Z was the Zoro of the capped crusaders that fought for the hand of a maiden in his own battles with depression. And he was the closest thing I had to a friend. But the mark of his sword in the forehead of my mind was going to be one of sinister steal. This was the last conversation that I had with him. I learned all too painfully that he was always the curator of my grave and the creator of epitaphs on my stone. I told him about my running away as if he was the one to truly understand the psychology of my breakdown. But he didn't take to this well. "Grow up Jon!" He shouted over the erection of telephone poles as he chastised my fragile nature. He then confronted me about my feelings. "What are you talking about?" I asked. I didn't understand how they were relevant to the situation. And I wasn't courageous or bold enough to even accept these feelings never mind take a chance and let them blossom in his mind. "You're a time bomb. One of these days you are going to snap. I thought I was going to go crazy, but you are insane! You are going to end up in a mental institution." He said, as is the furious lecture that one receives upon the confusion of having lost themselves in the abnormal art of addiction. "God can not save you now!" he proclaimed as though he was the maker of heaven and hell where he played the pawns of the omnipotent. "I think that

suicide is a good idea." He said with a slither in his voice as if I had truly demolished my life in the never-ending tunnels of intestines that sang the "A" "B" "C's" of never recovering. Those were the words that he left me with and that was from the one person in my life that I risked my heart with. I just said, "Thanks a lot Z." In the most sincere voice he said, "I'm sorry." I then hung up the phone and never spoke to him again. But it was the climax of the alphabet that had hurried the snake too soon as it ate its tail towards the end of my so-called life.

The semester at school was coming to an end just after my trip to "Disney Land." I attended school with Z but never saw him again as the photography class that we took dwindled into the end of the year without a teacher. There wasn't any structure involved and everyone worked independently. But I imagined my name was forming in the swamps of the school as a product of psychological perversion and emotional debris. And I can't say that I wasn't a painting of fruit that had been decaying with the hunger of flies. I quickly finished up my assignments for the drawing class. It was the one room of my life with a door that had been glowing in the cracks of light. My teacher was wonderfully impressed with my work in the class. She asked me if she could take the drawing I did of the vivacious vacuum cleaners and convoluted character of *Gumby* to her former college. She was going to give a lecture and display the work of her students. As I remember her saying my work was more impressive than the freshman pursuits at her former college. And this was one of the

countrie's better art schools. So as much as I was ruined in the riots of my madness there was something about myself that was still worth that stamp on the face of time. It was an Ivy-League art school, the one she believed I had the imagination to attend. I was clouded in the broken bicycle that I once rode in my undivided identity, but still honored that one of my drawings was going to be a part of a lecture there. When she came back I had so many worries that were festering in the forest of night that haunted my mind with the calls of animals that retrieving the drawing was not of importance. When I finally did go to get the drawing from her she looked all over for it but she couldn't find it. Somewhere along the line the work of art was misplaced and has never been found. I didn't have to be a genius to figure out that it was stolen and most likely maliciously. I was upset that I had poured my heart into this drawing only to have someone take it away from me. It was the lighthouse on the stormy coast of an apathetic sea that stranded me in the waves of worthlessness. So many people had access to the room where it was kept. Anyone could have taken it. In a way it was a compliment as cruel and heartless an act as it was. Someone considered my work to be of such a high caliber that they went ahead and thieved it from me. Today it's probably hanging in someone's personal gallery where the crimes of art are more than just graffiti. Fortunately my teacher took a picture of it before it was stolen so I've had the luxury of making reproductions. But the spiteful act amounted to the type of luck that

was dropping the soap in the shower of a prison. And it all added up to another brick in the wall in a life that was building a bomb shelter.

Some time after this I quit my job as a cashier. It was not a place for me to earn a living as much as it was the prison of a psychosis that develops in the dehumanization of the odd one. My coworkers did not talk to me, unless they had something insulting to say. They were often harassing to a point of bringing them pleasure that made me wonder what the hell I was living for. Word about me had reached every corner of the world and I couldn't escape the sorry sight of my own face in the mirror of other people's eyes. My place of employment was a whipping post of laughter and my back was raw with blood. I needed a change and I imagined so naively that one would allow me a clean slate. It seemed so miraculous that I soon found another position as a cashier at a supermarket that had just opened on the other side of the state. I figured it was far enough away and the change was going to be a breath of fresh air that gave me the opportunity to reunite with my identity in a new atmosphere. The job turned out to be just as tormenting in the assaults of character. I was different than others. I was a developing surrealist that painted my portrait in the melting clocks of extraterrestrial customs. One song that has always spoken to me is *People are Strange* by the Doors. I was always living the words of that song in the stranger of myself that disappeared into the shadows of foreign lands. I was quickly recognized as the employee that was the weakest link in the corporate chain of meaningless ladders that lead to the heavens of nowhere.

The majority of people I worked with were women. Though there were a few that were befriending as I was positioned in the climate of the working world it was the women that I found to be cruel. The first day on the job we were at orientation. There were maybe ten of us. After the session was over one of the women turned to me and said in a tenacious hatred of men, "So what's your problem?" As soon as I started the job I suddenly had a problem and it never let up from there. All I was doing was sitting there. People just can't resist themselves. How I fall so quickly to the bottom of the social pit I have no idea, but it was going to be there that I stayed in my inability to find self worth. There was just something so defective about me throughout life that gave people the go ahead to wipe their ass with my tongue. It was hard for me not to have amounted a certain degree of self-pity, as this was a painful matter of fact that I repeatedly learned through my own experiences. In the weary sulk of my demeanor I was never fit to carry myself effectively among the minds of society. Because I was so introverted in my personal space as I shied away from the connections that kept the reality of people in the distance of dark I never assimilated well into the working world. It was my choice in jobs that was deteriorating me in the damnation of the world. But as is there were no jobs for the ones who touch upon the poetry that burns the face in the lucidity of the divine. And I was with a world of flat dimensions. I was never quick to defend myself in the shadows of what were suspicion and races of rats through mazes of meaninglessness. I couldn't defend myself, as I was not

programmed to function with the dead brains of disease that spread across this land of ours in the pursuit of plans that scurried for cheese. I didn't have the skills to do so. In the laboratory of the mad scientist I had been altered in a mutation that was designed for a different mission. And so I fell time after time, as I never belonged in the beating heart of blood that spilled over onto the floors of force that supported the slippery enterprise of the dollar. Not that it wasn't a necessity of survival, but it was just as much a matter of madness.

When working at this new job I began to discover a horrible side effect of LSD in my newly found ability to slightly freak out in public places as I was crumbling under the stresses of the job. What was left of my life as I sifted among the ashes of other relations was not helpful in reinforcing the perception of myself as someone that I actually knew. At the time I occasionally hung out with my brother. He was my only friend and as friends were concerned they were dropping in value very quickly. The stock market just kept crashing. The beloved freedom of the America that I once knew in the monument of Liberty as it guided me upon the shore of the female deity was never ending in its succumbing to a great depression. My brother was best friends with a kid we called Corky. Corky was large in build and fancied himself a tough guy that had a prowess that could not be stopped. But he was slow in his ability to mature mentally. The two of them used to lift weights as was always the mark of men in their vanity of strength. In turn Corky was good friends with Red, the master of the underworld that ran amuck in the name of Satan.

One day I was giving them a ride and as we were driving around we stopped at a gas station. My brother went in to get something while I took some time in silence to reflect on the road that was leading me to oblivion. I sat with Corky for a few minutes and then out of nowhere he said in the excitement of a mental munchkin, "Aha! I know what your game is!" And then he said something about a child molester. As soon as he said this my brother hopped in the car and said, "Yup! Chester Chester child molester." I couldn't believe my fucking ears as they had been embroidered with the perversion that sickens the imaginations of mental midgets. I've tried to suppose that they were talking about someone else, but I was the only one there. And I wasn't one to imagine voices so clearly in the howling of the wind. Of course I was so frail in my mouse of masculinity that I didn't know how to combat this type of accusation. They thought they were being funny but I didn't take something like this as the heart of humor, and I shouldn't have. I didn't say anything. I just pretended that I didn't hear it, but I knew this wasn't going to go away any time soon. It was a sad suspicion that exploded in comedy and hatred, which I never deserved to be stricken with. And so the rumor went I supposed. From then on my attempts at rebuilding my friendship with my brother came to a fiery close. In fact they turned to outbursts of rage. Every now and then I lashed out at him and he couldn't figure out why, which pissed me off even more. I can only imagine one of two things. He was not talking about me, or he had such a deficient concept of my situation that he didn't actually believe this could

infuriate me. Things were not going to be pleasant between us for some time. And my life as Z was so insistent upon rushing in suicide seemed to sink further into the desperation of depression.

With the pressures of absurdities that swam amidst the sharks of the almighty dollar, and as I was shattering with the looking glass of an unfamiliar face something was bound to happen. A crevasse came upon me like a roaring freak of fangs and jaws that had suddenly escaped from a medieval mad house in a satanic possession. It was a creature with the hunger of ripping my flesh in the violent swings of a savage feast that strewn my blood about my room. The raw intelligence of the hypnogogic hallucination was circling me in the slaughter of a night that cried with the sacrifice of a lamb. Stalking me as it had been waiting the right moment to strike the subtle breaths of a soft and whispered sleep with the concrete clench of bloodthirsty teeth. I was so unsuspecting as I was lying in bed. In the midst of the day I was falling into the gentle hands of an elegant woman that messaged the muscles of my mind in the numbing of a nap. Nothing could have been more pleasing than the affection of my pillow as it played upon my face in the seduction of sleep. Much like the warmth of skin that I could imagine in the cheek of a sweetheart that shared the romance of life's innocent slumber. But suddenly as my mind had been vanishing from the horizon the current penetrated through my body. The sensation was the same as my first encounter with the Christmas tree of my central nervous system. I became fully aware as I was thrown into the energy field of crystallization that organized the

illustrations of my optics as they rolled in the back of my head. I remember being so enthused about it as I thought that I was the voyager of a legendary land that held the manuals of mankind. If my life in society was beyond repair I had a place in my mind that no one could puncture in the bleached cloth of divine phenomena. I was ready for the offering that was to touch me with the pleasant present of a nightingale that pressed the healing magic of her whispering lips upon my mind. I desperately needed something wonderful in my life and I was getting ready to fondle the future of light years that are eventually to wash man into the heart of his inception as a child of Mother Nature. But instead I found myself driving my car down the same highway that I traveled to come home from work. I didn't know where this was taking me so I just went along with it. But I seen enough of that highway to know that I wasn't enthused about a reproduction of the physical world. This was lucid like a television show that was preprogrammed. It was clear to me that my mind had the ability to create a theater of thunder and lightning that took the touch of a dream and magnified it against the violence of the sun. My organ of sight as it was in rest freaked out as it bubbled in a fire. I remember there was a lot of traffic and everyone was being redirected towards an off ramp. I tried to move into the other lane to go with everyone else, but no one would let me on. One person swore at me and made a rude gesture, as this rat race of a ridiculous world hadn't the room for me. Despite my efforts to follow everyone else I was pushed away and headed towards a tunnel. Once I entered the

opening I was no longer in my car and instead of having any kind of astral body I was simply an observer in the time and space of another dimension. I went through a series of underground tunnels that were part of a sewer system and I began to sense the murk of disgust that clang to the concrete of this substructure. I came to an opening underground where the walls were covered with graffiti and I imagined I had been led to the lair of filth that sits about the useless of society. There were stairs that led to another tunnel and I floated into it as seemed to be in a program that my mind constructed in a teaching exercise. Something seemed to be directing me because I was not controlling my movement. I often wonder in dreams about the fate of imagery. Sometimes I think our immediate emotions are what are guiding us. Yet in this occurrence it was hard to tell and this was not the normal dream. I went through another series of tunnels and came to a stop. In front of me was the beginning of another cavern but it had a massive steel door covering it. I remember wondering about the significance of the covering when suddenly something started banging on the other side of the door. It was so real in relation to my bodily functions that a terror took hold of my heart and began to pump with a force that was on the verge of losing control of itself. I had no idea what was behind this structure, but it was of a power that took the solid steal of reality and pounced it like a punching bag. Huge dents in the door began to erupt as the Satan of the unseen tortured the tin foil of my mind. Whatever this frenzied animal of rabies and rage was it repeatedly hit the door instigating the

thunderclaps of titans with each thrust of terror. I didn't know what to expect and my imagination was a horrifying terrain of the many faces that fit among the monsters of man's creation. I was paralyzed in what was a moment of trembling in the lucent madness that was all too potent in the reality of my mind. Finally it busted through and my fear was given a face. It was a tank of some sort with an enormous drill connected to the front of it. Only the monsters of a manmade machinery could have brought me so much horror as I watched it drive by me and into the adjacent wall. In the spot where it drove the machine left a large hole as it burrowed further into the labyrinth of its insatiable design. The opening began to transform in the mutation of feces that spewed from the drill of machinery and into the hell of a demonic dungeon. The prison cell of unspeakable tortures started to change as if time were in an accelerated fury of my own fate in the underworld. I could see it rust in the sudden mania of losing my mind to the twinkling madness of the *Twilight Zone*. Then from behind me I heard the high-pitched scream of laughter in the maniacal exploration of evil that mutilates the misery of flesh. Satan was a coward that couldn't show his face to me, but in the freezing terror of my blood as it hurried frantically through my heart he didn't have to. The stockade of stone and terror then turned into the inferno of a fireplace that burned with the reeking flesh of cremation as a wire mesh covered the miniature hell. The wasps and hornets of Satan's workers were suddenly aggravated in their nests to crawl among the screen in the feast of fire that awaited me in the dementia of

psychosis. My mind was held hostage in the horror of being trapped within the cartoon universe that colored crayons of flesh eating torment. I kept repeating to myself that it wasn't real and that I always had the power to annihilate the torture of demons. Suddenly it was over and my concept of reality was changed forever. I never truly wanted to believe in an ever-present evil. I had a place within me that was joyous with the light of heaven and I wanted that to dominate my philosophy of the world no matter how demented it became. I've heard a few times that Satan's greatest feat has been washing away our belief in him. But now it was impossible for me to ignore the curse that was being cast in the open wounds of my mind and suddenly I was stricken with the promise of damnation. I haven't been able to fully experiment with sleep paralysis since because of the overwhelming feeling of dread that accompanies it. Soon after this I checked myself into the hospital, as was the last resort for someone of a situation that was trembling like a child in a nightmare that I couldn't escape. I was sure that I was not only losing my mind, but also succumbing to the absurdity of someone stealing me into the concentration camp of eternity.

This hallucination certainly pushed me over the edge and was to become a prophetic scenario for far too many of life's situations. Not only was I going through a difficult time, but also now it had been brought forth into consciousness in symbolic fashion. All the things I had been working so hard to repress, so hard to ignore, as if they would wish themselves away were presented to me in a demented

maze of satanic possession. The continually occurring devastation of my identity as it could not adjust to the demands of the world was ferociously concentrated into this hallucination. My life had drastically mutated in the virtual reality of madness and I was now a walking corpse of a full-blown mental illness that people didn't want to treat.

The first person I turned to was my mother. I knew no one else that understood the wicked of evil in the world so much as her. At this time in my life my mother tried to be there for me. But no matter how I reached out to someone I was of an imbalance that could not be grounded in the sanity of normality that featured me among the minds of simple lives. I had advanced into the prophet of a madman and my mind was a developing complex of mazes that battled with the sickness of a fiery fate. My mother and I began to develop a much closer relationship, but it had its twists and turns. I told her about the hallucination in the terror I felt of having such a painful power. I was touched with something so serious in the bounty of my brain that the intensity of my existence was multiplying in the fire of neurons. I remember we were sitting in the basement talking as I told her while I was trembling in the reflection of the occurrence. I don't know what I was expecting from her. Too much I suppose. At the time she was starting to discover what New Age was all about. Her friends were fascinated with the prospect of new and alien beliefs that offered a twist on the Catholic religion that they had always been so involved in. My mother seemed to me to be delving into unusual territory

though later she denounced it. But after I told her she tried to convince me that she was a witch. "What the hell are you talking about? I asked as I was clearly taken back by her claim. I didn't need another bombshell dropped on me. "You would rather believe that you are insane then believe that I am a witch." she responded. What she was actually communicating to me was the direct link that she had with her own psyche and the forces of the unseen. Of course as being her son it appeared only natural to her that the paranormal power of vision that I was so madly exalted with was encoded in my DNA. Drugs woke the sleeping giant of my inheritance. But I didn't want the dynamic structure of genetic divinity if it was also going to plague me with the manuals of madness.

The open language of love that LSD spoke to me in the over absorption of psychic influence had come back to haunt me in the aftermath of what was psychotic residue. The defenses that I needed to withstand the invasions of pod people were no longer there as I scurried about the sickness of a stolen solitude. My place of refuge had been under siege by the Trojan Horse of addiction and everything struck the core of me as the attacks came in the repeated surprise of a freaking mind. I wore my brain like a glove that shook everyone's hand. On my forehead the master of absurdity had designed the decorative valentine of a window. The world watched with the amusement of a puppet show as the Claymation of my character danced beneath the strings of man's merciless power. My entire being was shaken in the shadows that roared like lions in the blood-

thrashing feast of what became actuality. I no longer recognized my reflection when I came across the rippling pool of what once was an inner beauty that surged with the rhythm of redemption. The connection was lost as I reached into the witchcraft of what was a science fiction story. It was a tale that spoke of another world, which clenched my heart with the claws of a mutation was I to cross over. It used to be that when people had something negative to say about me I was able to give it back to them. Or at least I was able to shrug it off and forget about it. But now things were aggregating into a conspiracy of defamation and I couldn't find a way with the traffic. Everything stayed with me like a bad odor that did not wash off. No matter how hard I scrubbed and washed the skunk of my name came with me wherever I went. Even if people didn't know me I had a television set on top of my head that broadcast everything that others thought they knew. There was never a program that ran among the specials of my own integrity. And there was no more transcending the illusion of nonsense in the channels that the world wished to watch. An age of reorganizing myself in the arctic pole of anxiety and desperation came at me in a blizzard of frostbite that was taking the limbs of my mind. To verify my reflection as an individual of honor that actually had a place among the people of the talking tongue was a challenge that I was not prepared for.

My family was more than surprised about my decision to check into the hospital. My mother actually asked, "Why are you doing this to the family?" I don't know why it was such a shock. There was a

frozen field that stretched between my family and myself. If I had broken my leg I might have received support, but they continually closed their eyes to my condition and didn't want to sympathize. The mentally ill are continually disregarded for their straits because it is such an elusive disorder that can only be diagnosed by a professional. But I certainly cried out in madness with more than a few signs. Surely my hallucination was a hint to the cataclysmic monarch of hell that was reaching his furious hands of fire upon the gasoline of my brain. The message I wrote on the wall in my bedroom that read, "Is Jeckel killing Hyde or is Hyde killing Jeckel?" should have tipped them off to the mayhem of my addictions gone wild in a science fiction horror film. And if none of that was an indication then I can't imagine that my trip to Indiana wasn't. My parents tried their best to be supportive. But it was hard for them to understand I guess and I was at an age where I was expected to be on my own soon. I was the only person in the family who had ever been stricken with such a severe disorder. My mother had the "Get over it" attitude. My father thought I wasn't enough of a man to handle adult situations. Neither of them knew the first thing about mental illness and I was the pioneer of an ocean that was going to drown me in despair if I didn't find land soon.

I say that I checked into the hospital. As if it were that simple. I spent the entire day calling people of the health profession looking for someone who I could talk to. None of them wanted to bother with me as though I was a child that couldn't be taken seriously. Or as sad as

it truly was there were no inns in the system during the pregnancy of my disease. I had one conversation with a woman that bordered on the lunacy of the mental health system in their obligation to help only the people they want to. "Do you feel like hurting yourself?" she asked. "Not at this moment." I said. "Well, we only handle severe cases." "That's fucking great!" I thought as I continued to reach out in what had become a frantic fantasy of being fingered off the road by the so-called assistants of professional help. All I got was the run around in an orchestration of psychotic violins that were worse in their warmth than the monsters of my mind. I had been initiated into the arena of psychiatry as a child. But that reception was dead in the passing of years that accumulated a new birth unto the structure. This was my friendly welcome to the wonderful world of mental health where the members of the mad are given their visa to go straight to hell. This wasn't going to do and I was determined to get help no matter how much I had been rejected as though I was applying for a goddamn job. I had no idea where the psychiatric hospital was and people could have given a shit if I needed to check in. I hate to blast the mental health system as being a member that is now so dependent upon my medications. But the truth of the network is lousy with far too many apathetic faces that ought to be put through plastic surgery in a spiritual awakening. The lack of empathy is horrific in what is supposed to be a healing profession not a position of parole officers that work you into the way of the world. Sure the medications are meant to do wonders, but not with the bedside manner of damnation

that is passed about among the elite of psychology as they play the *Monopoly* of your mind. And there is a flying fuck attitude of superiority among many doctors that ought to head straight towards the sun. As my mother has tried to convince me many of them get into the profession because they themselves are screwed up. But as it was I needed their help. I decided to hurt myself and imagined that only then was I going to be taken seriously by these people that presented an image of hope. I took a razor blade to my face in a desperate attempt to bring the attention that I needed. I then spent the day driving through graveyards with my face scarred. In the misery of my alienation as I was not even welcome within the warm walls of someone that understood I had become seriously psychotic. Finally I figured enough was enough and I found the courage to direct my ordeal to the bitter end. I drove to a nearby hospital and proceeded to cut my wrists. It was a dull razor blade and I really had no intentions of killing myself. I just wanted help. So the cuts were not that deep. They didn't parallel the depth of isolation that I felt as a member of mankind that belonged with the dead of the grave. But as involved in that vision of social condemnation as I was I had to believe that the light that synthesized my mind still awaited me for another day when I could piece together the harmony of my life. I actually got the nerve to walk into the hospital, as I was terrified about the prospect of what was to become a great humiliation. It seemed so surreal that when I think back on it today I can hardly imagine that it truly happened. I walked around for about five minutes until someone noticed me in the

disorientation of a dead and shady demeanor. She could tell right away that I didn't belong there. She could tell something was wrong. I panicked like a lost child in the face of another breakdown that slithered beneath my skin and wrapped its tongue around my brain. I couldn't believe that I had fallen so fast from the glory of ghosts that once cradled me in the consummation of my inner banquet. My heart started pounding and I began to walk faster as I feared the freak had broken free forever. The faster I walked the less oxygen that was reaching my brain as the tongue of serpents strangled my reason. I felt faint with a feminine aura of having indulged too deeply in the heart of my affair as I passed out in the middle of the spinning hall. I came to finding about three or four people above me asking if I was alright in the bright lights of aliens that they were as my mind failed to recognize reality. Then they noticed the scars on my face and on my wrists and suddenly I remembered the plight of madness that brought me to this very situation. A light bulb went off and they immediately put me in a stretcher. Their concern was genuine and as I lay in ruins beneath the structure of my own spewing mind it was their compassion that caressed the horrible fear of my shame. I explained to them my situation in the most coherent way possible. But I was tongue tied in a dizzy array of memory and thought that crashed like waves among the rocks of my mentality. What I was able to communicate I did so softly in the disgrace of a young man that could no longer maintain his mind. I was persistent in telling them that I wanted no one to know about this. If word were to get out my life

was going to be a feast for others to pick apart in the dining of demons. They were insistent about calling my parents. I went through all this trouble because my parents couldn't see that I needed help. I didn't want them involved and it was going to be an even greater humiliation. I once again feared the face of my family in my inability to structure reality in the holes of my eyes that had been burned by the cigars of a surreal sun. But if I was to be transferred to a good hospital I needed their medical coverage. I reluctantly gave them permission to call my father and he came to see me right away. We laughed about it outside as we both had a cigarette. It seemed simpler and much more protective to explode in a laugh than to release the dam that held back the tunnels of tears. I kept saying, "I can't believe I'm doing this." As I leaped upon the backs of giant lizards that mutated with wings. It was always the abnormality of my mind that carried me into the flight of another series that soared the surrealism of my life. I had hoped for a better way to get help, but it seemed only the cries of my malnourished sanity in the falling border of a breakdown was going to do.

Once we got to the psychiatric hospital we waited in the admissions office for a while. I was trying to comprehend what I continually felt to be an unreal occurrence. I kept imagining that I was being directed by a supernatural force into the dungeons of a sewer system where I was to find the physical form of Satan. The prophecy was a manual of madness that I had no choice but to read and follow. The software of my mind was programmed in such a

feverish way as to allow me little room to overcome the encounter with the flesh-eating fiend, whatever form he chose to take. Throughout my life I have had difficulties in deviating from the path that dreams present me. And many times I have been offered a blueprint of symbolic situations that I later confronted in their juxtaposition with waking reality. I always followed the riddles of reverie no matter how disastrous a fate they foretold. The power of prophecy was always a painful matter to master as something greater than myself liked to play with the toys of my free will. The thought of myself as a pawn was never a concept that I was fond of. But time and time again the master of the absurd pulled my strings in the puppet show of a young man that walked with the ants beneath the dark clouds that hid away the stars. My understanding of fate at the time was building with the certainty of an inferno that awaited me in the fireplace of cremation as I imagined I would be locked away forever. At the time I was too disoriented in the dementia of mental outlines to belong anywhere else in the world. Finally I got in to see someone, as my heart had been ready to burst with the tragedy that was befalling me in my fears while I waited. The woman asked me a series of questions that I do not remember. She was visibly concerned about my appearance and I sensed a great deal of empathy that amounted in her perception of me. The initial talk with her was refreshing as seriously terrified as I was that visions and reality weaved their play upon the synchronicity of insanity. I went on and on about my visions and nothing else. I could only deal with the

problems of my meek and muttered language of rapid retardation in the symbolic grandeur of mania and inflammation that brought me to the humbled state. I was worried about being placed on a unit with other people and in the horrible weakness of having brought myself to such a level of humiliation I couldn't bear to face anyone. But she convinced me that it would be okay. All the time that we were talking I kept chewing the medical identification that was on my wrist in a compulsive attempt to keep me occupied. I was continually regressing into the form of a frightened child that was following the pattern of damnation in an unconscious automobile that didn't have any brakes.

When I was settled in the unit my parents came to visit me the next day. Nothing was discussed that I remember. The pain of the incident was a matter of embarrassment that shriveled me into the shadows of never showing my face among the members of the free world. I had a feeling that this was the beginning of the end. The integrity of my mind had been massacred in the mirror of a fatal flaw that asphyxiated my ability not only to communicate, but also to arrive at the necessary knowledge to form basic expressions. My mind repeatedly retarded in response to the demands that were being made upon me as a man. I didn't want to discuss anything with my parents and I just didn't know how too. They were patient with me though and they were both trying to be there for me. But they had no clue that I was actually in this much need of professional help. My mother brought me some art supplies to labor on the things that work

within the better half of the brain. When I was in the hospital all I did was draw and that was the form of communication that soothed the beast of a swollen tongue. Throughout my life I've been ignored as an individual that had little to say or had no value. I've always felt a tremendous amount of grief and frustration in my deficient skills of oral expression. Mostly because I've been cornered into the irrelevance of individuality as I walk the world in the swallowing potion of invisibility. I've continually been perceived as someone that has nothing to offer and repeatedly underestimated for the true circles of perfection that are actually pulsing my perception of reality. These ideal formulations of self-realization are pure in characterizing the true form of the mind and even I within the world of words can not parallel the possibilities of concentrated creativity. But my talent of expression in the magic of images, be it so compensating in the poetic art of color and shade spoke volumes to people that they could never articulate with the word. I could condense a thousand words into an image of a face and still leave more for people to imagine. It was always my gift that granted me the effect of dialect and in a house of retreat the family of disorders took to my internal reality that I threw about in the wand of a magician. I talked to people on occasion as my art always impressed others. However violently my mind thrashed its worst circumstances upon me my art was the one quality of expression that could actually position me in the sky of a Cinderella. I remember one man that I was a roommate with whom I really liked. He had bipolar, but he didn't strike me at all to be

unstable. He was highly intelligent and we talked every so often. He was very interested in my art as I tried to explain to him the techniques and tricks that I used to create my work. "That will take you so much higher than any drug." He told me. As if I had a mind to fulfil a childhood dream in the malfunction of mutating activity that had damaged my chromosomes. He was much older than me and knew his way around the mental health system. He took time to sit with my parents and I and talked with us for a while. "Jon is very smart." He said. "He could make an excellent teacher if he wanted to." My parents did not think the world of me back then and they never appreciated me for my gifts. It was always the encouragement of strangers that propelled my desire in the direction of a maddening height. My father's philosophy was tough love. I needed someone to reaffirm them that yes; I was and could be somebody. They always found a need to concentrate on my faults. I had many positive qualities that they never acknowledged. My mother encouraged me to take up fine arts, but she had an attitude about artists. They were members of society that could get away with whatever they wanted she claimed. She sure as hell wasn't proud of me and neither of my parents ever thought of me as someone that could succeed at anything. I was always the son of broken bones in the body cast that cradled a brain, which only amounted to a place in the world where I wasn't wanted. My parents expected me to be pumping gas at this point in my life and they never taught me to believe in the potential that actually had the power to surpass them. I had to gain my parent's

acceptance once again. Just to prove to them that I was worthy of the simple position of their son. As we were sitting there talking about this exhausting entrance into the death of an official diagnosis he began to tell my parents that I should learn all that I could about my illness. And it was vital that if I had a doctor that I did not like to find a new one. Unfortunately good doctors were not going to be easy to come by and I was to find that personalities were not always attributes that these people had.

People at the hospital had to constantly reassure my parents that I was a good person who was quite capable. I had shown my doctor one of my drawings that I initially did when I arrived in the unit. It was of a mask that perched in the pleasant persona of a smile that was so concealing of my illness as I took the punches repeatedly. But behind the mask a tormented figure of feverish flames and unnatural pain screamed his last breath of sanity as alone as the spirit truly is in this world. The doctor was unresponsive to the drawing and it seemed to me that my form of communication was too unusual in its illustration of my madness. But as we later sat with my parents in a meeting an expression came upon his face that I will never forget. It was filled with the convictions of a masterful mind that knew the textbook of psychology. As if he had been in the presence of something extraordinary he said to my parents, "Jon can do anything he puts his mind to." I was taken back and just glanced at my parents in the disbelief of this man's strong opinion. I couldn't even hold a damn job in the worthless arena of my mind as it exaggerated

drastically in the direction of the absurd. And being in a mental hospital I imagined life was going to take a turn towards the end of my mind as a machine that had malfunctioned beyond the repair of man's ingenuity in psychotherapy. As much as I favored the flattery of these people I myself had little faith in me. I may as well have been the severed limbs of a deaf dumb and blind child that my parents perceived of me as I had fallen so short of becoming a man. After taking a long psychological evaluation one of the counselors had to convince my father that I actually had morals and it even came as a surprise to me. I had repeatedly been informed of the insufficient ores that were never in the mine of my moralistic grain. I can hardly imagine that I could write this book if they were not more abundant in the diamonds that dance weightless in the faith of the heavens. Obviously there was a reason why the people at the hospital felt the need to boast about me to my parents. I had fallen into the misery of mental illness and I needed the support of people that I knew to climb the broken ladder of maturation if I was to find a place among the living in the raging rat race of the world. My parents did not think much of me at all. In a way my creative mind always seemed to me to be a betrayal of the basic Christian values that I found to be so ignorant and oppressive in my father and his family. My mother was more relaxed, but even so the freedom that I found in my mind was not to actually be expressive. It took me some time to entirely break free from the limits of my parents and embrace the independence of my individuality. The unpractical and even esoteric occult that I was

so fond of fondling in the indulgent intercourse of diving with the dolphins was never approved of in the bloody cross of my father's house. I was in a situation where I was dependent upon them. As little worth that I felt I had in their eyes, it was now a maddening matter of putting back the pieces that were bezerk in their behavior and proving to them that I was worthy of the praise of this doctor.

Things at the hospital seemed to be going well. The Satan of my vision had not been as murderous as the laughing ripper of inflamed flesh. But still I was paranoid and exhausted in my eventual encounter with the form he chose to take as my fears so seriously predicted an infernal fate. Many of the patients were genuine in understanding in their own battles with the chemistry that modified their brain. Even some members of the staff had a particular concern that was founded in their own experiences. But there was an overpowering aura of elitism that encompassed the British royalty of doctors and much of their assistants. These people presented an attitude that was to be feared in the weaker minds of the patients. I was not particularly fond of my doctor even though he claimed I could do anything I put my mind to. He was not popular with the other patients either. He seemed to be in a position where he could only relate to the hardships of what each of us was going through in the journals of scientific research. It was that strict science of psychiatry that secured many members of the mental health system in the nobility that the poor of the patients were to bow before. Intellectuals yes, but with little experience of having been dragged

into the dirt of what it meant to be ill. They were crafted at the art of removing the human element in a freezing encounter of handling the intimacy of a patient's mind.

I still had a hard time talking with counselors. I didn't know how to approach any of my problems. As being more confused within an internal reality it was difficult to assemble the many fragments of my mind into a structure that was expressive of my condition. I didn't know how to incorporate memory and thought into a texture that was descriptive of my own feelings as they related to the current situation of my sudden breakdown. I was complex to a point where I didn't even understand myself. The misfortune of retardation as I appeared socially in the slumping shortage of my left brain brought about a new age of uselessness that buried my self-esteem in the punishment of my illness. I couldn't function as others in the dialect of daily life. That was much of the reason why I needed so much help as substance abuse had scattered the particles of my mind in the pressures of my adulthood. I kept getting stuck on one event, as I had never been able to fully integrate it into my mind and build upon it in becoming a man. For so long it seemed to me to be the one situation that took my life and reprogrammed it in a new reality that accelerated into the flying fabrics of having completely lost sense of sanity. It was such old news but the sewer that I continually crawled about in, as I could never escape the social condemnation of a rat, led to even worse assaults on my character. I just could not leave the incident alone in my mind as I further devastated the delicate associations of my

memory and imagination in the igniting of addiction. I had escaped it in the heavens of a goddess, but I couldn't learn from it in maturation. I attributed it to the root of all of my psychological disorders as my mind malfunctioned in the memory of consequence. In the feebleness of my mind as it first began in the fantasy of hallucinogenic substances this was a simple matter of my inability to face my first taste of the reality that implodes in on itself. And there was such a reality as much as I tried to deny it. The shadows of situation had the force to be so substantial that they could direct a series of causes and effects into the oblivion of myself. Whenever asked what the problem was in my outreach for support I reverted back to the incident of informing that led to the parade of persecution. I was trapped in time like a fossil and my ability to grow had become a situation of sitting still among the muck of swamps. I was tormented in the never-ending misery of this memory as it stalked me with a butcher knife, which was the blade I knew best to be tangible about society. I understood clearly that people suffered with greater crosses of external situations. But mine was of a disorder that blistered violently in an internal process. It was not the actual event, as it stood in its place in my personal history. It was the antagonizing of my memory, as I had never before known it to revolt against me in the further instigation of illusions that built upon the broken reflections of my mind. Something was clearly wrong with my brain. I remember one night sitting in the kitchen. One of the counselors came in to talk to me. "How are you feeling Jon?" She asked. "Okay." I replied.

The conversation continued and eventually she got to the point. "None of us know why you are here? You don't talk to anyone." She said. With this a rush of fragile memories that had walked their way into my reality began to surface as they broke apart upon the rocks of her confrontation. I began to shake uncontrollably as my brain had been programmed in the damage of addiction. The aftermath of LSD in which I later sought the apple in marijuana computerized a system of withdrawal into the terror of an autistic personality. She was concerned and asked if I was nervous. "Yes." I said. I continued to tell her that I was paranoid and of my drug abuse. But to trust someone with the leap of faith that was capable of organizing my mind was so unreal I never imagined it could be done.

Not being able to discuss things openly with people made treatment difficult. But it was also distressing that everyone was so ready to dismiss my visions, which were the shaking pillars of my Samson's eyes. I wasn't given insight from anyone and I was in the midst of those that were specialists of the mind. "They don't mean anything." people would say. I was so disappointed because of this. And I was rather naïve in my understanding that the combination locks of creation were workable among the science of medical intelligence in their mundane cognition of creativity. These were people of pills and chemistry that diminished the artistry of the mind in what they thought to be witchcraft. I was under the assumption that this was the forum in which I could discuss these phenomena with people that had an understanding of the mind as it accelerated in

the face of neurological sortilege. But they were pushed aside and I was left to a personal journey that walked with the fire of unlocking the riddles of these manuals. Not only was the neurology of my makeup ignored as its hands crafted my gift, but within the visions themselves the eraser of sobriety eradicated their symbolic meaning. They were left in the tales of fairies and in the gentle lips of *Sleeping Beauty* as she awaited the kiss of my mind in the all too delusional world of my unfair madness. And if the juxtapositions upon my life situations were only evident to me the wizard that wielded the sword of the comparisons was just as capable of slashing it in the detachment of my worlds. I was hoping for a little creative thought on the part of some people, but it was only a homeless artist that decayed in schizophrenia below the nobility of professionals that knew the sorcery of the creative mind. It seemed to me that no one cared to involve he or herself in the mystery of the occult that had become all too common in my concept of reality. The hospital was rather a place to attain a stable mood and it didn't involve the deep probing of my psyche that I thought it was going to. It wasn't an atmosphere to unlock deep psychological meanings from the mystification of my inflamed instrument of sight. At the hospital the goal was to stabilize the mood on medication and then situate me into psychotherapy upon release. Yet none of this was evident to me at the time. I had no idea how the mental health industry worked. I was delirious in my degeneration to a state of childlike faculties. This was a refuge where I imagined I could seek the mother of miracles that

stored the intricate perplexity of answers I had always longed to discover about my own mind.

It was only to aggravate the terror of damnation that I stuck to the ideals of what I imagined the hospital was going to be like. And my standards where not necessarily of earth. They were more along the lines of the things that explore the expansion of the mind into the composition of its curiosity. I have a very vague memory from childhood about a class trip that I once took. I still question the validity of the memory because it is situated so far away in the recesses of my mind. There was a small museum of science that we once attended. I remember it stimulated with games and anomalies of abnormality that work the mysteries of perception. There was a wonderful world of science that was capable of divinity in the fire of its artistic mind. The memory is so distant and I am sure that I have made a romance of it in conjunction with my imagination. But when I imagine it today I get dizzy in the many unusual apparatuses that creative science can be capable of in the eccentricity of serving only to mesmerize the mind. Not merely something as simplistic as a strobe light as it induces the missing pieces of space and time. But glass onions of machines that given the proper attention of something as useful as a simple vacuum cleaner could deepen in the layers of ingenuity as devices that serve the purpose of themselves. I've always dreamed of a museum among the landscape of neurological art in the bizarre machines of systematic life that take their course in a quaint order of evolution that's purpose is not functional in the normal path

of science. I like to picture a realm of science that sits about the ocean in the Galapagos. Not science fiction as that indicates applications that are out of reach. But appliances of conceptual ores that sit still in the psyche never having been actualized as not having a purpose to serve mankind in conventional means. In the weird world of my mind there are digital actions that envelop themselves in the nonsense of having such actions. I've always envisioned my mind in the memory of this museum as having the components to constitute the invention of absurd treasures that offer myself the intense pleasure of why. And I've burned with the romanticism of a funhouse that tantalizes the cerebral cortex in the higher games of augmentation that place upon the earth the best of humanity. If not only to entertain the brain with the puzzles of itself. I've idealized such a place in my imagination as an entrance onto the greeting that shakes the hand of fire where the artistic mind of psychology brings forth the best of that which interacts with reason and turns logic against itself. I've always dreamed of a house of neurological matters that made windows of the mind in the inventions of technology. Somewhere where there were outward projects of the imagination in whimsical mechanisms that synchronized the brain in the best of science's doors as they create illusions with the androids of art. Not simply a gallery of creativity, but an institute of laws that fly apart like bees and reorganize into the wisdom of beards upon the face of the perceiver. A legislative process that operates on the edge of functionality in breathing the air of the mind's conundrums as it presents itself in the endless time of

married mirrors. In my reflections there is such a treasury that intensifies the potential of the brain to witness itself in the process of itself. Surely I was mad and I suppose a part of me had projected some of this ideal house upon the hospital. Not entirely, but those fragments that played with creative thought. It was a place of scientific study that concentrated on the brain and it was filled with the games of psychology. And it burned with the madness that I knew to be so divine in this memory that I surgically enhanced. There was a certain amount of my understanding that expected the creativity of the mind and its connection to the brain to be fathomed and spoken with a language that held the puzzles and anomalies of science. But as I repeatedly learned throughout life the experimental textures of imagination were not handed out with frequency and I was a bizarre image of a young man in the eccentricity of implausible possibilities.

About three days after being in the hospital I was told that I was going to be transferred to the drug unit. "You will get some answers to your questions there." One of the counselors told me. I was highly skeptical and in the delicacy of an illness that had me ready to burst into a roaring river of tears upon the first slight of my constitution. I made many friends on the unit I was on and especially enjoyed the art and wit of the homeless schizophrenic. He was the only person I knew to be creative in his conversation and he shared many of the same childlike qualities that I did in my understanding of what was going on. I wasn't thrilled about being transferred and I was almost certain that nothing good was going to come from it that allowed me

the peace of mind that I needed. When I arrived on the unit I was even less thrilled to see everyone so sober in the misery of withdrawal. It was a detox unit. I didn't need to be brought down off of anything. Everyone there was coming down as demons danced about in the air while they strangled them into the agony of cold turkey. The unit was predominately filled with men. I didn't necessarily have a problem with all male figures in my life. It was only the jocks of the street that glorified the nonsense of being a tough guy. And there were more than a few as I couldn't bear the energy of rough pavement that emitted from the exterminating hearts of masculinity. Men were always ferocious in their hatred of a weaker male and I was never a stranger to this concept. Though some of the people I met were passive in their personalities the overall stench of the aura that cast shadows about the unit was overwhelming. This was not a healthy atmosphere for me and my mind immediately became buried in a defensive mechanism that was not to be open at any costs. Some of the people were very ignorant and most had criminal records. I never judged someone by a past offense, but I couldn't escape the wretched wreck of fear that was being manufactured in the factory of my vascular organ as I felt like I was among old friends again. The paranoia quickly began to sink in more furiously than I imagined I could bear. After the second day there I feared for my life in the delusions that were the reasoning for my checking in. "How was I to find answers here?" I kept asking myself. No one knew me but I carried that television set above my

head and I had already spoke too much of my past within the walls of the hospital. My labels did not fit well with this group of people. I immediately knew I was to isolate in the bubble of what initially made me mad. In this unit many of the people were not there because they wanted help. They were there because they were arrested on drug charges. I did not fit in well. The friendships that I made with people that I felt I could relate to were gone and what was a serious mental illness had just been set on fire. I was thrust into a situation that I feared I would be when I first checked in and the tunnels were leading me further into the matrix of damnation where the wicked laughter of a psychotic fiend waited to take my mind entirely.

On this unit the staff members had pre assumptions of myself that stationed me in the worthlessness of my life as I had lived with the fire of chemicals. I remember talking with one of them as she disturbed a brief period that was allowing me the solace of silence. I was sitting in the small section of the unit that was designated as the smoking room. It was very dark and there was only room for a couple of chairs. She came in to take my vital signs and I started to talk with her. I told her why I had checked in and that I was hoping to be put on some kind of medication to ease my anxiety. She knew my history with drugs and proceeded to ask me if I was looking for the perfect drug. She was very cold about it and could have cared less if I froze to death in this dungeon. They made a production about me not opening up, yet everytime I did try to talk to someone I was given the finger. It was becoming apparent to me that many of these people did

not enjoy their work and they only helped the patients that they took a liking to. But even in the heartless attention of this woman I couldn't escape the irony of it all as she so subtly reprimanded me in the Great War on drugs. When I first began my annihilation of common sense it was drugs that offered me a way to entirely alter my state as I mingled with the master of the absurd. But in those juvenile years I could never have imagined that one-day I was going to have to take drugs in order to make me feel "normal". This was certainly a revelation worth remembering every time I chose to get high. But still I wasn't very thrilled about the attitude of this staff member and there were many more just like her. I checked into the hospital on my own. I was not there because someone forced me to be. Other staff members tried to be helpful, but I never knew when one was going to stone me with a wall of ice.

I grew increasingly paranoid as I deepened in the vault of this substructure with no one to confide in. I was finding that absolutely no one cared enough to be patient in handling the raw lesions that I imagined could be tended to in this retreat from life. I was beginning to learn that much of the game was about pretending in the play of madness that I could be all right. But all I really wanted to do was break down into tears amidst the lack of compassion that was compressed in this last resort of my life. I didn't want my life to end like this, but I couldn't possibly imagine that my mind had the strength to grant me a carpet ride upon the clouds of getting well. I wanted someone to comfort me in the drawing that I did when I

initially arrived, but as I was learning this really wasn't a place where I was going to receive any kind of sympathy. I didn't want to believe that I was truly that alone behind the wall of my world. But it was now becoming a matter of embracing myself as the alien of existence that I truly was. I went with the flow and did my best not to show signs of illness. By this time I wanted to get out of the hospital and I couldn't bear another day in the inferno of paranoia that was continually collapsing my structure of reality. I was far too afraid of the world and this was becoming the worst place for me to be among the members of savage minds. I thought that by putting up a good front and acting as though I was fine I would be released. So I went on pretending and my privileges increased. I was allowed to go out for walks from time to time by myself. But I was a nervous wreck in the noise of my mind. I didn't trust any of the patients and was so unable to allow the bleeding veins of my boyish meltdown to be present among the pavement of men. I didn't know how to approach any of the difficulties I was having and as was I had a vicious imagination that positioned me among the network of the Mafia. I was afraid to be open and terrified to even be conscious in the labyrinth of radiating misery. I just wanted to go home and if I had a pair of ruby red shoes I would have tapped them like a fucking lunatic.

About the third or fourth day in this unit I decided to go for a walk. I had no intentions of coming back this time. I called my mother on a payphone and told her to get me out of this hellhole. In

her furious repugnance of my fallen character as I had exposed a weakness that filled her with disgust she manufactured the best of her heartless wall. "I am not going to help you. You stay there and deal with your problems!" she said as my spirit cried in the anguish of cremation. I was so certain that I was going to be killed in the all too real prophecy of sewer systems that were leading me into the dementia of this dungeon that I threatened suicide and hung up the phone. My mother was always a very strong woman, but my illness as it revealed such a puerile fragility throughout my life created in her a loathing of my nature that was forever fit to walk among the weak beneath her feet. I had my father's immaturity and it was made clear to my brothers and myself that my mother couldn't bear his behavioral characteristics. If it wasn't the world that found me worthless in the disintegration of my personality as I delved further into the darkness of disease it was surely my mother who was going to be impossible to please by actually making her proud of me. But as was at the time the snake had swallowed its tail and I was wrapped in a ring of retardation that had been brought on by the pressures of existing in the fury of man's world. I found a nice quiet place to sit outside in front of one of the main buildings while I imagined very briefly of a light that was dying in the wind as I had once positioned it at the end of my life. By this time the people at the hospital were notified of the call that I made to my mother. A van pulled up beside me and asked me to get in, as he wanted to take me back to the unit. "I'm afraid not!" I said as I was cowering in a pain that can only be

brought about by delusion. The next thing I knew there were about ten to twelve staff members and security surrounding me. "I'm not going back to that unit!" I said as I slipped into a psychotic statue of determination that held the pose of a weeping existentialism. They told me that I didn't have to go back to the unit and I believed them as I imagined if anyone understood my reasoning it was they. So I swallowed my psychotic features in the comfort of hope that the delusions were going to relax in a new atmosphere as I agreed to go with them back into the hospital. As soon as we got in the back entrance of one of the main buildings one of the staff members said, "Jon, you are going back to the unit now." But I had different plans as I freaked out in a pain that was penetrating me. It was as if I was a child whose eyes had been abstracted into the nuclear winter of the living dead that danced about my mind in the fit of a migraine. The next thing I knew they all grabbed me like a herd of rioting animals and wrestled me to the floor as I struggled to free myself from the manipulation that is illustrative of the mental health system. "I not going back there!" I screamed as I finally released the gush of rivers that my eyes had been so insane about building in the barbarous punches of paranoia. Then I let out a laugh as unreal as I imagined this situation could possibly be in the repeated breakdowns that were not fit to structure a solid foundation of fact among the realm of people. Finally convinced that I was not going to be able to adjust to that unit they decided to place me elsewhere.

The unit that I was placed in was for people who were severely depressed and suicidal, and for those people who were too psychotic to be placed anywhere else. Upon my arrival to this unit I once again broke down in flooding tunnels of tears because I feared I was never going be released after I freaked out so badly. This was the horrid fate of insanity that could no longer handle the simple interactions of a chronic conscience among the structure of mankind. I have to believe in my own experience that the mind is organized into a variety of coping mechanisms that allow us to structure reality and hold the weight of existence in order for us to function on a day to day level. There is a safety net of sorts that keeps us from falling into the unfathomable intensity of our beings. But having a mental illness in which serious substances are incorporated that net no longer exists. And many of us walk that tight rope, as when we occasionally glance down there is nothing but a vortex of mental processes that pull us into the terrifying fear of the height that is existence itself. My migraines were surely an introduction to my endurance above the cracking ice of substantiality. But more feverishly in the rewritten states of modernized alchemy I dangerously relinquished my ability to live above the surface of myself. Descartes established the proof of existence in the ability to think. But I've had the luxury of alterations that were capable of creating a thinking thing that only existed in a hypothetical question of itself. Whether or not I actually exist as absurd as such a question truly is in the face of existing was firmly incorporated in the thin air of improbability that I breathed in

inhalants. I found the query a valid argument in the true uncertainty of the answer as I experimented with the abstraction of myself in the atmosphere of absurdity. I had a vision that I could hold in relation to the reality of my psyche as an unwavering time capsule of eternal life. But as it was being presented me too many times with the meaninglessness of itself in the middle of nowhere. An existence in the foothold of flesh that gazes into a mirror of the nonsensical inevitability of nothing as what once was will never have been sees that reflection embrace the impossibility of itself. That grasp is a mammoth of eternity in the laughing gods that mock the relevance of existence in the matter of the greater world that is overwhelmingly absurd. So under certain conditions it was accurate to imagine that my life wasn't necessarily occurring. Or so I felt under those circumstances that were too unreal to be of a sound mind. The fact that I had to be placed on this unit was a testament to the treachery of chemicals in their extinction of the coping skills that I once used to simply be above the surface of the looking glass that I walked upon. It was going to be a difficult and virtually impossible struggle to reassemble those mechanics of emotional survival into a philosophy that organized the integrity of a true structure that I could call home. To help me get settled in the new unit they gave me a shot of something, as I was an emotional ruin that couldn't handle to be aware. I don't know what it was, but it suddenly made love to that place within me that longed to rest my head upon the beating chest of angels in the exhaustion of having had an orgasm. The drug knocked

me out for a good eight hours and I could have cared less if I ever woke up.

Upon waking I found myself with the nuttiest of the bunch. Many situations that these patients found themselves in were overly tragic and disastrously catastrophic. More so than I could possibly imagine in my own experience. But even so I felt right at home and you will never find more interesting characters than those that make their last stand of sanity among the trenches of madness. The suffering of the unsound is where you find that part of humanity that weighs the unbounded wisdom that watches the clocks of Dali in their own melting biology. From the hell of this unit sat the warriors of the mind in the Titanic clashes with the frantic sorrow of their existence. Some were fighting more than just to gain the will to live and a not many of them were winning the wars that raged in the universe of biological circuitry. There was one man in particular that I remember well from my time here. He was a tall African American wearing army fatigues. He looked like a refugee from the Vietnam War. I remember him because I had never seen someone so deranged. The only thing that he talked about was Bugs Bunny. But he didn't just speak of the character as much as he reacted to unseen stimuli. He was obsessed with Loony Tunes. His mind was fragmented beyond a reasonable doubt where reason itself was coloring with the crayons of the cartoon that was reality. To fathom his dementia was to fall into the heart of hell where Satan ate the flesh in the misery of the damned that were scattered processes of thought. His brain was inflamed with

the touch of Hades and the absurd sat down upon him like an earth that had fallen from the faith of the galaxy. He couldn't put together a complete sentence and occasionally he grunted like a wild animal as if he was giving way to his reptilian brain in a regression to the Stone Age. I imagine that to him the organization of matter was interrupted with transmissions from his memory and imagination that employed the derangement of a living energy in the insanity that is Bugs Bunny. If there is such a pure and immaculate madness it is in the mannerisms of this cartoon character, which this man happened to be damned with for the eternity of his earthly journey. It was as if he was trapped inside of a Loony Tunes cartoon while his mind ruptured in response to reality. I attributed his madness to heavy use of LSD or to the trauma of torture. He might have been a vet, and I know that war can assault the mind in rapes of violence that can never be erased. He was so deep within the workings of his mind as the fathoms most likely perplexed into multiplications of infinite mirrors that strangled him in every direction. In the empathic curse of my own faculties I can conceive of quite an amount of mental activity in the abnormality of his brain, but I couldn't imagine his recovery as a tongue that spoke the reason of insanity. He was too disassociated from himself to recognize anything but the features of his psychosis. Void of the things that hold most of our minds in the pools that touch our feet against the ground his only way of relating to others was through a cartoon. Somehow the mechanism that separated his dream world from his waking world had collapsed and there was a flood of chaos

within him. As I imagine lucid fantasy was capable of existing simultaneously with waking reality in a bizarre interaction. And I am sure that between the two was a comparison of light and dark in which there was no distinction in a dance of severe confusion that could not be remedied. I can only suppose the hell of existence in all its fury as it must have weighed down upon him like an ocean in the dysfunction of his brain and repeatedly reorganized the process in the apathetic face of time. To be continually crushed for the agonizing duration of life by the art of the absurd is the worst that the world can ever offer to anyone. I was young and didn't realize to the full extent the severity that had mutilated this man in the psychotic laughter of a creature that played the puppets of our brains. But the tragedy of having seen someone's brain malfunction that way as though it was a bizarre machine that assembled the misery of madness is something that I've always remembered. You can't erase things like this. I'm certain that he was clinically insane to such a degree that he could never be situated in society. He survived on instinct like an animal. He was able to perform basic functions like walk around and smoke a cigarette, but that was all. His only means of communication was through the schema of Loony Tunes. I've seen many actors in television and in the movies portray the insane. Never have I seen anyone capture the likeness of this man. I can always sense an actor's identity coming through in the character that is portrayed. But this man's identity was in pieces scattered about the thin air of a suffocating actuality. The only piece that seemed to fit was Bugs

Bunny. His only companion in the severed limb of his mind was this cartoon character who happened to be an antagonizing monster of madness in the many faces of cracking up. I once read that the thought in its most violent form is the eternal reoccurrence. How sad for that occurrence to be lucid in the imagery of the imagination as it walked among the matter of the world in a *Roger Rabbit* movie. In my imagination such a condition was so possible that it could be the only illustration that afflicted his mind with such a fury. Eventually he had to be locked in isolation after a howling eruption of choking on the fire that was grunting in his brain. Throughout my life I have had temporary bouts of madness in the inability to handle the intensity of my mind. But I can't fathom how someone can live with a chronic insanity that the brain is more than capable of constructing. I came to believe that such damnation exists in what I have envisioned in the psychopathic laughter of Lucifer. I didn't give this man much thought, but he was the embodiment of a possible fate that I was going to fear for the rest of my life. The harshness of his world must have shattered his mind like an eggshell against the brick of life's building. Even I found him to be annoying and judging by the lack of compassion that he received in the hospital I can only imagine how society must have led him to the inane marriage of the cartoon universe. He was once a shinning star of innocence that played the channels of television in the merriment of Bugs Bunny who only served to betray him with the lunacy of a rascally rabbit in the later deterioration of his brain. I think about him from time to time as he

has branded the infernal form of my greatest fear within my psyche. But I know his recovery is implausible and the master of the absurd hands down such fates as he rolls over in the laughter of taking his next victim into the furious heart of a meaningless world. The prophecy had fulfilled itself and I was given the earthly representation of possibilities was I not to find a way to live with my own mind.

I spent about a week on this unit. It was a retreat from life within a retreat that had been stationed in the further reaches of mankind where people didn't know whether or not they were alive. There was indeed a place in the world where we embraced the living dead of ourselves in the hopelessness of being in such a place. This was a kindergarten for the dreary clouds of death that covered our eyes as the wretched of the world where even Jesus didn't want us. We were aliens in the face of a race that worshiped its silly structure. And we had been dehumanized to sit about in the fleshy corpses of the five senses that at this point only served to betray us. I stayed there for the duration of the week and never left. We were all too despondent to go to the cafeteria or for a walk. My father came to visit, but my mother had it up the ass with me and she never showed up. I love my mother, but she was rather heartless in her ignorance of what mental illness is actually like. If I had been one of my brothers things would have been different, but unfortunately I was this thing that I am and my weaknesses were a shame upon the family at the time. I was a bizarre apparatus that bulged with insect's eyes in the science fiction thriller that took my relatives by storm. In the invader of myself I found an

asylum where the blood of my relations had run cold in the legions of legless lizards that detonated from the quintessence of a cube. It was in the heart of the block that I found the minds among which I belonged. Unlike being in the other unit where I was paranoid of different personalities I felt like I occupied the nucleus of this unit quite well. There was a reason for this and it was because I was not being judged. And I could relate more to others that shared the same desperation of dying through the crawling tunnel of time that flowed with the blood of having lost our minds. This was an atmosphere where the mind was something to let loose from its rusty cage and forget about for as long as I had the chance. I spent my days drawing in the reverie of my childhood, as I never could abandon the medicine men of my imagination. It was funny though that the staff never tried to talk with us. There were no group sessions or anything that chartered the territory of our ailments in helping us cope. The only kind of therapy was music. We had only one group that I remember in a small room of rainbows that resonated in the air. We all sat at the piano as patients played different songs. It surprised me that some could play so well as if they had taken sanctuary in that very room for their entire lives. In the sickness of falling off of the face of the earth there where notes upon the mind that cried of life in the dust that whispered in the wind. One patient played *Desperado* by the *Eagles* and the fact of her fate in this plague of existence was most likely to play the hopeless cries of isolation forever. Another played the *Entertainer* and captured a creativity that brought a vibrancy about

the room in a brief moment that our minds in silence were not capable of. Both were quite good. I learned *Greensleeves* as a child on a small keyboard but couldn't remember much of it. It was rather pathetic for me to sit there and try to be as expressive and beautiful in the magic of sound, but I played what I could remember. The staff member that was with us picked up on it and played the entire song for me with an elegance of the melancholy that the piece had always captured in my heart. Words were never spoken within the group and we thought about the air in our minds as each danced upon the keys that uttered a universal language of synchronization. Towards the end the counselor began to play *Eleanor Rigby* in a rushing wisdom of passion that sat him among the bench of the hospital as the only one that knew how to care. I imagine as an artist of sound his depth of our pain reached so much further than the others at the hospital could imagine. Each of us sat collective in the whirlpools of overwhelming vibrations that were striking our essence with the story of tears. It was an encounter upon our ears that paralleled the situation of our own loneliness in life as what we were living was death in the decay of what we might have been. That was the only therapy that we received on that unit. I have to say that in my entire stay at the hospital absolutely nothing could have comforted me more than the pleasures of the piano as it vibrated the beauty of sorrow upon the puddles of my heart.

Eventually I proved that I could be transferred to another floor that had more privileges. This unit was similar to the first, but for

people who were not as severe in their disorders. I spent the rest of my time at the hospital here and never talked deeply to any of the staff. I had learned painfully what the hospital was all about and it wasn't the resort that shaped my mind with the professionals of sanity. If anything it was a place to absorb the unbearable misery that soaked the walls with the blood of too many unfortunate worlds of mental decay. I had seen enough agony in the ravaged realities of those whose lives were beyond repair. So much to last me the rest of my life in a reflection that bears the faces of the disposable human beings that have most likely lost the waging wars with the master of absurdity. My life was going to continue in the surrounding of those that have never been to the fundamental level that cries out in having been flushed down the toilet. So many people sit above the throne of their perfection as the judges of feces that they sculpt into the faces of the wretched. But now I was disposable in another baptism that couldn't possibly allow me a life in this society. I was never again able to think less of the disgraced in their humiliation with the world as my own spirit had soared naked in the shame of its malformation as a member of freakish spectacles. By this time all I wanted was to go home, but to return to the place that I once knew wasn't within the realm of having been mutated into the perversion of a clinical diagnosis. I had crossed a gateway of ludicrous lips that sucked me into the slither of a tongue where I was to be swallowed into a marriage of medication and morons for the rest of my life.

After my time at the hospital I was placed in the outpatient program, which lasted about a week. This consisted of three to four groups' sessions a day. One of the coordinators of the groups was a very nice woman that spoke to me upon my initial arrival to the day hospital as she fathomed how lonely I felt in the anguish of my snowballing ice age of an earth. There were always mothers throughout my life that understood the injured child within me as a curiosity of a young man whose features had still not fully matured. It always haunted me that my involvement with a woman was never a fact of my heart that actually touched the fire of having been intimate. I longed for the companionship of a free and gentle spirit that played the poetry of a relationship in the creative dance of courtship. But such women were a figment of my imagination and I was bizarre beyond the ability to attract the soul mate that I yearned for through the unending desolation of my disease. I struggled in-group, though I tried my best to express myself openly despite the intense paranoia that I felt as it blazed within the blindness of eyes that had lost their sense of practicality. I tried to leave the focus of the internal realities that were turning the gears of my soul behind and finally started to talk about the difficulties I had dealing with people due to my paranoia. People actually related to me in their own fears of such monstrosities as the Mafia, which seem to be relevant to many situations of mental illness in which drugs have been incorporated. The fact of the matter was that such an organization could have cared less about many of us, as we were truly more involved in our

imaginations than deeply embedded in the underground of a criminal fraternity. There were a few among the patients that I am sure had disastrously gone too far in their involvement with the madness of an unlawful society. I truly never knew anything substantial enough that located me in a position of actually threatening the security of serious criminal activity. Anything I did know was common knowledge and I could never have offered proof for what was suspect. Judging by many of the figures at the hospital that were stricken with a similar illness as mine it seemed that narcotics possession itself in the company that it kept was enough to warrant the fury of the Mafia. But many drugs are meant to be overly exaggerative in the users ability to structure reality as I have found to be true. Especially marijuana as it is notorious for the effects of missing pieces that break apart about the puzzle. That is really the heart of what induces the wicked torture of the brain in the mind's attempt to fill in the voids. And those of us with a touched complexion of character have imaginations that are cruel and betraying of our sad situation in the sewers of our minds. The truth of odds was really laughing at the possibility that I would one-day walk in my room to find the severed head of a horse in my bed. But such nightmares were characteristic of my one time connection with thugs who in fact handed me a worse fate in the humiliation of my life. Though my fears meant that I had something in common with others that were being strangled by the prospects of what paranoia is capable of in conjunction with substance abuse and brain disorders. The dread of an overactive

imagination is often grounded in the cloth of reality that is worn by the world, but it was more a congestion of energy that coughed the products of impairment in the degeneration of my brain. A certain amount of paranoia was healthy in maintaining the safety of my life and involving myself with people that were of a moral fiber. But when it came at the cost that I could no longer live about the beatings and rapes that tortured me within the penitentiary of my mind every waking hour something was definitely wrong in my disease. Throughout my life there have been delusions of plots that were organized to castrate my genitals and blowtorch my face, which only proved the absurdity of my brain's mutation in the discovery of what was really going on. Never was there an illusion of a conspiratorial situation in which such a situation actually unfolded. But to have such fears throughout my life was what addiction did to me in my imagination as I once danced with the devil of a crowd that played upon my fears. But even when I dissociated myself from them the mentality of madness that I knew never left my mind and it was a curse that carried me throughout society for the rest of my life. As I couldn't help but imagine all people were of the same core that conspired in hatred. I've grown tired of the betrayal of my mind as it has so often shattered my mirror into a scattered puzzle of reflections that wake from the dead and haunt me in the many faces of my past. The disorder of my life was going to continually surrender to the promises of drugs where the inflammation of my brain was originally initiated in the intense suspicion of going mad within itself.

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Throughout my life in a useless depression to seek the grail in desperation I relinquished the very cement of sanity in the worst of places. It was going to be a matter of divine intervention in the salvation of my situation to see a new within the hearts of those that have such an organ. And it has only been now upon the wonder of words that I can fit so clearly within a layered complexity of organizational inference and emotional courage that I am intensely testing a theory. It has become a matter of proving that I am capable of changing the structure of my brain in the witness of itself through a synchronized orchestra of words. It is daunting to me to experiment with the narrowing of language, as it is comprised of the exact pieces that fit carefully into the puzzle. And within such an undertaking that gazes into the reflection of my naked mind as it dances with dialect it also burns with the increments of trails that walk through the wooded regions where I have never explored. And it has healed the doors of what was once locked in the retrogression of this thing that can sit here and perplex into an endless journey within itself. As I understand in what knowledge I have of the brain each experience burns itself in the branches of this machine that generates the fathomless involvement of ourselves within our universe. I have to believe that the trajectory of thought in its unleashing purity of a natural spring in the heart of the psyche is potentially able to produce a tree of divinity. One that bears the delicious fruits of a regenerated engine, which pulses with the pure energy of everything it perceives. The cathartic process of writing not only purges the bowels of the

mind, but also it builds the cathedrals of philosophies that amplify the brain into an organism that stretches further within the mechanisms of itself. I've mastered so many areas of my own design in condensing my rational thought into a river that flows into the pulsation of a philosophy that itself suggests that which lies beyond the boundary of words in their morsel of the mind. I've beheld the evolution of my structure in the paradigm of a reflection that Aristotle saw in the purpose of humanity to imitate the perfection of the Prime Mover, whose only knowledge is of a self contained absolution in a continuous consummation. I can't mirror the life of an immaculate design in the interruptions of what have been many mistakes and miserable failures. But as once having witnessed a core within the mechanics of what I hold in my personal ideal of neurological art I am capable of the potential to realize the unthinkable in my own scope of reality. This book itself was unimaginable to me, as a worry of worthlessness had so long retarded my ability to imagine myself in the actualization of my imagination. Yet I've realized it in one of the many miracles that my mind has made as it leaped into the acceleration of itself. In my own potential the paranoia of abnormal brain activity can be restructured into a perspective that is organized into clarity as a ball of crystal that I gaze upon in the amazement of what I can actually see. Proving to myself the theory that the brain can be changed upon the power of will as such a thing is the force that bends the spoons of impossibility. The miracle of all of this was to be so greater in scope to the power of what I could imagine as I was still

a child in the hell of a flesh eating torment that made a misery of my mind. In fact, my organic radiation of the universe was to undergo even more serious traumas of death in the eruptions of atomic weapons upon further descents into the damage of mild retardation.

My potential to think of myself with confidence in accordance with the concentration of creativity was going through an atrocity of terror that branded me in the abnormality of being hospitalized. Whether or not I was to ever walk among the world in the mortification of having been sentenced to the psychotic creature of repeated breakdowns was unbearable a question to have to ask myself. The continually collapsing fear of another relapse was so real that I couldn't possibly survive in society. I had been given a face of deranged attributes that struck people in my childlike horror of reality. I was now a person that was meant to be feared in the ignorance of what my illness was were people to find out. All in all the stay was not what I expected and I left with a pain that settled me among the more tormented of the warriors that battled with the buried mines of reality. In my state of mind I could not make the best of my time at the hospital and in the dreary of the dungeon there was more to absorb than I could possibly bear. I felt no relief from my pain and grasped that such a suffering was meant to be born upon the emptiness of a brave new world. But, I accomplished what I set out to do in the Columbus of my earth that was rounding about into the unknown of a sea that I sailed in blind faith. I brought the super glue of attention once and for all to my problem. It was an issue that my family

continually failed to recognize. I was going to need ongoing support for the rest of my life if I was to survive in the muck of society. And my family was a crucial piece of the puzzle that I required to give me the will to live.

Having been through the system of mental health I've been humbled with an opinion that thinks it of the dark ages. I'm sure its come a long way over the progress of the century, but it was nothing like I imagined it would be before that first time that I checked in. Granted I had an unusual imagination in the accretion of cognition. But I think I was mostly expecting compassion. From a few people I received it and it still touches me today the movement of mathematics in the passion of the piano. I've never known someone before that worked within the system that could see into our vanquished hearts with his own sensitivity of having an earnest soul. But he was an individual of different constitutions that only artists have in their bleeding hearts upon the sight of a miserable world. Had I the strength to be open with the staff that took an interest and built a progress in the counseling I would have received so much more support. That was the major difficulty with my stay. I could not establish trust because of the intense paranoia that I felt. I thought that there was going to be extensive psychological testing done. I thought I was going to receive wonderful insights into the workings of my personality and of my brain. There were a few counselors that took an interest in me. But at the onset of something like this the confusion was just so intense in the fury of hell that I did not know

how to organize my problem into factual assets that where expressive of an external reality. Most of the people there didn't understand that my situation was truly of a neurological nightmare. It had always been and I was just not able to hold the world above my head anymore. Not even the doctor recognized the neurology of my condition. I can't help but believe that in fact a majority of my illness was a question of my brain producing the art of a creative madness. Be it a matter of drug induced mutation in conjunction with the shaping of migraines it was still a discussion of an organic anomaly. The hospital didn't concentrate on working within the sympathy of gray matter as much as it should have. They had a division of neurologists, but it was never of a suspicion that I should have met with one. It was that section of the hospital that would have benefited me most in understanding the ailments that brought me such a wicked power of insight. People expected of me to be quadriplegic with external dysfunctions of trauma throughout my life. It was continually asked of me if I had ever been through the misery of sexual molestation or child abuse, which was never a matter of relevance in my life. My father and my mother tried to offer me the best possible childhood that a kid could have under the conditions of my illness. My relations of the street were only deep in their ridicule of my weaknesses and I wasn't involved in external dilemmas that positioned me with many of the other patients who suffered severe traumas through the curse of their lives. The most that the staff did was hold out their hands. But as my brain foretold of its own

dilemma it would have taken a tremendous leap of faith to reach someone with the scattered fragments of my dizzy world, as I never knew how to place the shreds of my sanity. And because I was transferred from unit to unit I was never able to develop any kind of open communication with anyone for very long. This agitated my instability within the walls that reflected an even more maddening environment than the internal reality of my fragmentary mind.

My experience with the whole mental health system was insufficient in systemizing my sanity of what were indeed staggering mental processes of abominable emotions. When an individual undergoes the betrayal of their brain there is nothing left but the existential inquests that wander into its workings. And being perplexed into the offering of a bizarre image of blind madness there is a rushing flood of Noah. And to swim about the chaos of ones own passions is enough to drown in the wrath of God. The accompaniment of feeling as it was superimposed with the engineering of thought was too much for me to bear. Being one that once could have rejoiced at the beating breast of nature in the reality of leaves as they fall from a tree I opened myself too intensely to the emotion of my heart in the rhythm of my mind. To have such a strong sensitivity to the nature of truth and the multiplication of mirrors as they reflected the agony of reality that strangled so many of us in our cornered position in society was more than a matter of a sponge. It was a question of a systematic view that assimilated experience into sections of the psyche that incorporated too much of

people's pain as my own. I didn't know how to live with this and I sure as hell didn't want to. It was a matter of learning how to shut the valve in order to survive. Checking into the hospital I was looking for the answers to life's questions. I found them in what were the lives of those that had the fire above their head as they walked within the wind. It was those of a severed mind that bordered on the death of depression and the children that they were in the treachery of their life as to live was forsaken and left in the garden of a former world. The answers burned within them as their eyes spoke of a raging hell in which their minds left them nothing to lose. It was the anguish of existence that they all spoke to me as they beckoned me upon the wings of their courage to last through the misery of one more day. The wisdom of pain instructed me again as it did when I was a child in the burning bush of my migraines. The voice was clear in the madness of those whose eyes had seen the world implode in the end of time as it continually brought them back to the trial of a life that goes on. It is those that suffer with a mental illness as having walked the edge where sanity and madness are mere concepts that bear no weight upon the depths of having been dead that the answers flourish. Within the hearts that have been ghosts of their own mirror comes the best of humanity. I learned more about myself from the torture of those whose minds had fallen from the palace of themselves and into the underground of a mental vortex. The doctors didn't have answers to my questions and they never cast about the angelic hands of enlightenment. They brushed my "hallucinations" aside and couldn't

even speculate what was the cause of my too savage medium of sight. While I was there in the company of so many elitists of the mind I felt like I was less than human. I can't say this was because of the treatment I received, but rather how I felt about myself. I was so ruined in the face of my peers that pegged me to belong in this institution for the rest of my life. I checked myself into the hospital to receive support for a problem that I had been dealing with on my own for quite some time. My mania had been a serious issue throughout my life in the extremity that I explored upon the lust of my tongue as it caressed the solar flares of a mermaid that swam about the sun. I brought attention to my problem, as I couldn't bear the burden of walking alone through the world with the heart of a prophet whose course was self-fulfilling. And I was crying in the grief of insanity for my family members to be supportive, which they tried to be. But it was very distressing for me to leave the hospital with my new identification. The doctor slapped a shinny new label on my forehead that read "Schizo-affective" and gave me enough medication to sedate an elephant. The liquid lips of the system had swallowed me into the boiling water of people's perceptions and as if I wasn't erratic enough. The world now had a reason to make sure I was never to forget just how unstable I could actually be.

It took me a while to adjust to the new label. It took me years actually. And there were little resources of information available on the illness. The doctor at the hospital was eager to hand it out in the tattoo parlor that left me grotesque in a freak show of ignorance. The

entire mental health system was geared to educate about schizophrenia and manic depression while I walked a line that spewed the fire of not knowing anything about myself. It wasn't until the advent of a digital amphitheater that gushed with pornography and the underground of society that I was able to find some information on the disorder. The Internet wasn't entirely a feast for moral decay and I found quite a few areas of interest within its network. From what I've read it is a relatively rare disorder. People who do not meet the criteria of manic depression or schizophrenia, or who show signs of both illnesses are usually diagnosed as schizoaffective. The symptoms include hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, and catatonia. Bizarre behavior is also a symptom. These characteristics are all a part of the disorder. Depression and mania are also factors but differ. Some people have a schizoaffective disorder with a depressed mood. Others suffer with a manic or hypomanic mood. While some experience alternating depression and manic or hypomanic moods. I would later be given a diagnosis of schizo-affective bipolar type; meaning that I suffer from mixed moods of depression and mania along with the psychotic symptoms that are associated with schizophrenia. It was never a question to me that I suffered from bouts of mania and depression throughout my life in conjunction with or as a result of the migraines. But I didn't experience the paranoid symptoms that grouped me in the schizoaffective disorder until after my use of LSD and psychological dependency on marijuana. Of course the crowd in which I belonged exaggerated those symptoms in

the true disasters that drugs are capable of in removing coping mechanisms. But I am probably not of this disorder in the purest sense of the textbook as much as I am a mutation of a neurological house that sits about myself in the Galapagos. The question of my drug abuse causing my symptoms did come into play. This was the main reason why I was placed on the drug unit. But because I had problems with depression and mood swings in the past it was determined that much of my disorder was something that I suffered from my entire life. Drugs were the work of worms that ate their way into the catastrophe of exaggerating it beyond my ability to function normally within my own thought.

At the time none of this amounted to a pile of reeking shit in the disgust of my toilet. Whether I was suffering from a clinical disorder or whether I was stricken with an evil spirit that was castrating the reproductive organs of my pragmatic constructions I was still in a pain that bore the weight of having been sentenced to an even stranger reflection of who I was. And they told me nothing about the illness in a palace that was truly for the elitist of medical intelligence to harbor their own knowledge of myself in a game of poker where I never knew what cards were of my suit. When I asked the doctor where I could find some information about it he simply said that there was none available. That was just great. Not only did I have to live with and adjust to this disorder, but also I had to go through the blind corridors of life learning of it through the experience of the *Pinball Wizard*. In the undertaking of this book my aunt brought up a very

valid question in regards to my diagnosis. "How were they able to diagnose you with so little information available on the disorder?" She asked. I didn't have an answer. But as I have learned in the mental health profession there are many well-kept secrets among the elite that bear the window of the patient in the peculiar matters of their personalities. Which are not necessarily insights that need to be known by anyone other than the masters of *Monopoly*. I have accumulated enough data on my condition for my doctors to assemble their own book on my case study. Yet as far as I know I am not allowed access to that material. To make matters worse no one else knew of the illness either. My family thought of me as a schizophrenic because it was so close in name and nature. I don't know about anywhere else but where I came from schizophrenia was a four-letter word. Someone with that disorder had no place in society and may as well have lived out the rest of his or her days in an institution or a group home. It was a death sentence. To tell someone that I had a schizoaffective disorder was to say that I could be psychotic, which is another four-letter word that strikes terror into the hearts of those that didn't understand. I sometimes couldn't tell which was worse, the illness or the stigma that comes with it. They seem to feed off of each other in a viscous circle that drills the mind further into the substructure of madness where I was to find a home away from home in the exotic island of existence.

After I was released from the hospital a friend of my mothers was breeding Golden Retrievers. She was kind enough to offer me one of

the newborn dogs as a gift and being in the condition that I was in I couldn't possibly imagine a greater present that wrapped itself in the wagging tail of love. I had known so much of the darkness that dwells in the heart of mankind for what seemed to be too long. But an animal of an innocence and purity that played with the joy of a friend was what I imagined to be the companionship in the will to live. They have a heart of open emotions that transcend the barbarisms of human relations. People were excessively cruel and asinine. The soul of a dog was honest in a mythical tale of a fluffy race that resided in the superior virtue of creatures whose place among the gods was secured far before any man or woman. Dogs felt their way around reality with their feelings and I always wanted a friend among the muck of mankind. The litter was a family of adorable miracles that bunched together as they played about in their introduction to the world. I went to her house to play with the dogs every so often to get used to the idea of actually owning one. They climbed on top of me and licked my face as if I was special in a way that people couldn't see. They were precious little life forms of energy and spunk in the middle of a world that was filled with words and nonsense. I took the dog that she had set aside home with me and developed an instant bond with her while I reverted to the basic structure of my mind in a nonverbal relationship of communication. She didn't have a name though and my creativity was stifled in the deterioration of my illness. I thought of Goldie but no one seemed to

like it. One day when my mother was playing with her she blurted out the name Peanut Butter. The comical name stuck.

The friendship that I developed with my dog was like none I had ever known. She loved me unconditionally and to her I wasn't a psychotic or a malformed product of substance abuse. I wasn't even someone that liked little boys. I was Jon Gemma and my dog saw in me the person that couldn't be dehumanized by society. She followed me wherever I went and gazed at me with the eyes of a wild psyche that reverberated processes of thought back and forth between us as our brains united in moment's of harmony. And just as the gaze wandered into an ocean of nonverbal whirlpools she often rushed to me and jumped upon the call of my thoughts. I'd take her for long walks through the woods everyday and there was an unspoken language that we both understood. I never had to put her on a leash. She'd run about twenty yards ahead of me and then stop and look at me while she waited for me to catch up to her. Peanut Butter had such a wonderful personality and her inherited mind was gifted with the gentle ways of her mother. She was very well behaved and people couldn't believe how human she was as she interacted with them so skillfully in a language of affection. More than just a dog Peanut Butter was a member of an alien race that had inhabited the body of a canine. There were times when I swore that if she had the vocalization of a human she would have learned our language and spoke of the great race of superior beings that dwell in the hearts of mangy mutts. She became a friend that I could confide in. She never

talked back, but when I spoke her eyes lit up as she processed the undercurrents of my speech. She paid attention to every word I said. Though she didn't understand what I was saying, she sensed the emotions that underlined everything. And I didn't have to say anything meaningful either. I could talk in gibberish as much as I wanted which was a great relief from having to make so much sense to people. I could write a book of nonsense just for her and every word would ring just as true as these. When I'd get depressed she'd sense it and come close to me and affectionately lick my face. Or when I was lying down and feeling unhappy she'd jump on top of me and curl up into a ball on my chest. Peanut Butter's worth was something that I would have given my life for. I know that many people who own a pet feel just as strongly about the bonds that they have developed. Animals are the spirits of raw beings that lie beneath the structure of human intellect and they hold more of the native mind in the basic substance of life. I can't help but imagine that the evolution of human intelligence hasn't lost its ground in that which is so fluently understood by the lesser of the world. To share a friendship with one of the worlds wiser creations in their natural thought of a less contaminated mind had therapeutic benefits that were restorative of my inner self as I huddled in the corner of becoming an adult.

About a month after being released from the hospital my resources were running low and I had to find another job. I ended up gaining employment at a local family restaurant washing dishes.

Menial positions in the work force were all I was ever capable of in the holy fool of my severing mind. And even with Peanut Butter to keep me company I was still very despondent in my managing about the ways of humans and in fact felt an isolation of character among society that I never could adjust to in my disease. I no longer cared about things the way I used to as I once feasted on the fervent splendor of a final touch within the paradigm of perfection. A new start wasn't something that I entirely felt within the capabilities of my emotional energy. I didn't have the will to walk among the grace of humanity in the heart of a poet, as I could have tasted life more vehemently in the desire to dance with the talking tongues of the five senses. Washing dishes decked the halls of my regressing worth in this world. And I scrubbed the madness that chewed upon the feasts of fast food and made the vomit of stench in the disgust of bitten pieces that may as well have been regurgitated for the little ones of wings. I felt at the time that it was within the home of a palace that I belonged among the scum of its mastication. The grotesque duties became all too pleasant and familiar of the slopping muck of melting ice cream and the psychical sickening of the many mouths that left their trail of garbage for me to worry about. To be appalled at the existing matter that was an excessive overflow of remnants soon became a matter in which I could have frolicked in the madness of the slop like an infant in the curiosity of clay.

Work went on as normal and my coworkers seemed to like me, which in turn helped elevate my accelerating spiral of a downward

depression in the mirror of my low self-esteem. But what they didn't know was that I was getting high off of the whip cream canister like a bandit in the night of many missing pieces. The transformation of material existence once again dispersed in the dizzy field of an energy that swept the damsel of an alternate reality. The whip cream was pressurized with a large tank of nitrous oxide that was kept in the back room. Such was the candy of Greek mythology in the many faces of the gods that conceived my own existence in the womb of Aphrodite among the false notion of a material world. And it was indeed in theory only that I cleaned the plates and glasses of mankind's mud. Every half an hour or so I took a short break and went to the bathroom to have a cigarette. But before I did this I'd take the biggest hit of nitrous that I could. My lungs were capable of a hot air balloon that could have suffocated me in the higher regions of the atmosphere. I wouldn't exhale until I got to the bathroom where the throne of Titans awaited me to sit about in the supposal of serpents that hissed the hiccups of my existence as a question was to unfold before me that layered in the onion of its impossible answer. When I was in the men's room I'd sit back and let the feeling of nonsensical fountains in formations of ripples rush into the rivers of the absurd. I was truly a traveler of time in the obliteration of the concept as such a thing was dying in the wind of an archaic dimension. And of course I was one of the more foolish members of the human race to annihilate the reality of my life in the worst of places. Eventually there came that moment of realization where the

gods betrayed me to walk among the world in the dirt of dishes as such was a fate of material existence in the worthlessness that I couldn't escape. As soon as the organization of my mind fully materialized in the cement of matter it was back to work as usual.

As far as I know no one suspected a thing. I was back in my old routine of demolishing the one reality that I should have paid the most attention to. I honestly didn't give a shit as I imagined my life in a societal construction had already dug its grave. All I was concerned about was thinking of something creative and potent for the endgame of chess that captured the king of my epitaph. The absurd in his mastermind of pawns that growled like geese in the nonsense of a world where nothing fit into their place had dealt me the disaster of myself in a game that just wasn't worth playing anymore. Things went on like this for about a month and I was barely living above the water in the cement of my shoes that kept growing like ballooned bacteria. It was the night before Halloween when the master called me upon his kingdom of fools to join in the angels that fly upon the fury of the sun. I don't remember much from that evening because I violently fractured my skull that night. I do remember what I like to call very small intervals of consciousness in which pain amplifies upon a nuclear fallout that left the earth of my brain to bear only those brief moments. I recall being put in the ambulance as I pulsated with a furious insanity of suffering that was a vice about the fragile shape of my skull. Then I remember lying on a bed in the hospital as I screamed violently in the spontaneous combustion of my skin as it

bubbled in the third degree burns of my brain. Then I was sprawled out on a couch at my parent's house only in the desire to stop the hatred of this machine as it tortured itself in this trauma. That's all that I recollect and even that is rather hazy. Everyone at the restaurant assumed that I had slipped and fallen, suffering a trauma to the head. I had no memory of what happened and couldn't say with certainty what caused the fall. I didn't remember using nitrous that night. But there was much that I couldn't remember. I knew that with my previous use of Freon it sometimes knocked me unconscious: I had to put two and two together and concluded in the severe anguish of another consequence that I had taken too much nitrous oxide, as I had fallen unconscious in the bathroom suffering the head concussion. The absurd as he was in his wisdom of fates laughed even louder than I could bear in the echoing chamber of my mirrors as they shattered into an even greater puzzle of my brain. Once again the gods had cursed me with another price to pay upon my regression to matter. And this time I was lucky to have regressed at all.

I'm still unclear about what I hit my head on in the missing time of an alien abduction that painfully probed the anal of my brain. My face was bruised, my nose was bleeding, and my tooth was chipped. If it wasn't for the fact that I was alone in there it could have very well been seen that I was assaulted. And that wasn't an outlandish suspicion in the paranoia of my illness. All the king's horses and all the king's men tried to piece together what happened as the doctors troubled about the humpty dumpty of my skull and that thing within it

that was now more useless than an outdated processor chip. The absurd had smacked me across the face with the glove of his nonsense and now I was to digitize about the brain of a young man in the backtracking of becoming boyish beyond my ability to mature. Such were fates of fools that walk the earth with the signature of death in the seed of their birth. There was one theory that I fell forward hitting my face and my tooth on the top portion of the urinal. Then I may have fallen backwards hitting the back of my head on the ground and fracturing the all too fragile form of my framework. In turn my brain lunged forward in a leap of worry that feared the worst of its demise as it bruised the tender tissue of its frontal lobe against the front of my skull. At least that's how they tried to explain it. The doctors weren't convinced with the story about my slipping and falling. They concluded that I might have suffered a seizure. At the time I was on Paxil, which is an anti-depressant. It is sometimes known to cause dizziness and blackouts. I never spoke a word of my nitrous oxide abuse, as such a confession was certain death even beyond the scope that was the horror of my brain. I let them form their own conclusions based on what little they knew. It wasn't important to me to know how it happened. I didn't want to know. I just wanted to go home and rest. I remember being in the hospital in the anguish of hell asking, "Do I have to work tomorrow night?" That was the only logical thought that I could put together. In fact, it was the only thought.

I have never in my life felt as much pain as I did that Halloween eve and into the following week. Not even in the riddle of an irrational ballet where the elegant mirrors stretched the entire proportions of a room in my migraines. I can only imagine one pain more frenzied in the agony of raping the soul with a fire of fury and that is which drenches the drapes of skin with fire. I came seriously close to kissing the absurd forever and his tongue of death wasn't the hissing of a slithering snake. It was a moon of rock that had bounced in a game of basketball as it collided with my mouth. I was foolish to have been doing what I was doing and I need not have worried about the incisive tongues of society, as my own ability to destroy my life could not be matched by the impetuosity of people. No one knew about my little trips to the bathroom high on nitrous in the fairyland of a preposterous forever that I could never prove to be occurring. It wasn't until a couple of years later that I had the balls to finally come clean to someone. My entire family was worried about me and praying for me the whole time. My mother was especially concerned. I wasn't about to admit to anyone that I had almost died because of my foolish escape from the terrestrial shoes of mother earth. At the time I was weak beyond my own ability to take responsibility for my actions. I felt the head concussion was punishment enough. The effect of its disaster upon my brain was going to prove that it was indeed a penalty that was going to twist thought. It would do so into the further conspiratorial character of society as such a world so skillfully delved into my dreams and played the illusion of psychic

wars. It was at times in severe bouts of confusion that the intensity of thought was to revolve society around me in a matter of my world within the *Truman Show*.

Immediately after the concussion I was placed on workers comp. Then after about three weeks they discontinued the checks. My mother was very worried and in my continually regressing constitution she was the supervisor of my sickness. There were a lot of hospital bills that began to build in piles of shit that reeked as I kept dropping the bombs of my illness in the advancing image of uselessness that couldn't wipe my own ass. None of this was important to me and the only thing I wanted to do was to crawl into a toilet and flush myself into the sleep of never awaking. My mother went ahead and got me a lawyer and we took the restaurant to court against my will. I couldn't possibly tell her the truth, as the vicious heart of her hellish judgement stood before the courts of law in their feeble attempt to mirror the wrath of extinction in seeing me tossed naked about the freezing pavement of never again having a family. The emasculation of a brutal rape in the torture chamber of satanic sadists didn't compare with my mother's fury. It was a matter of survival that I softly whispered the secret only to myself. After taking legal action I found out that my boss from the job was fired. They did not know about my use of nitrous but they did know that I had a past with drugs and that I had been hospitalized. I often talked about it at work with other employees. Some of who were in Alcoholics Anonymous. The higher ups must have found out that my boss had

hired someone with a sketchy past and fired him for his poor judgement. This brought me more guilt than I was ever prepared to live with. He was a nice man who didn't deserve what had happened to him. He took a chance on hiring me and I let him down. I single handedly ruined his life. I was never much of a man in my ability to bear the weight of my own actions. I had a mother that could be domineering and a father that never spent time with me. I know my actions were of my own accord but the fact of my personality was withering in the wind of a fragility that shattered about in the face of situations as they spoke too strongly of a deafening reality. I feared the consequences of my actions in the heart of hell that had now come upon me in what was to become a long road. In the many missing pieces of my mind as they scattered more violently than ever there was a journey to be made upon the mythology of redemption. But as it was I knew that no one could prove anything if I just kept my mouth shut. And I was rather good at getting myself out of trouble. I didn't own up to my responsibilities and I wore the cloth of a coward. I settled out of court for about $7500. The place of employment had me sign a form stating that I would never work at another of their restaurants for the remainder of my life. In the delight of my escape from the clutches of consequence as I thought myself to be so lucky upon the wings of my survival it was that which I obtained. The red wings of freedom in the tires of the road with an engine that whispered so seductively to caress the breasts of endless journeys

about the state was to later haunt me in the symbol of a machine that ran away from itself.

The guilt that accompanied my poor decision to keep quiet worsened my state of mental health that was now exaggerated even more disastrously by the bruise of my brain. Before I was recovering from a psychotic break, and even though I got away clean, I had to live with myself and what I had done. This wasn't as simple as I thought it was going to be. I destroyed a man's livelihood. I lied and practically stole money that I didn't deserve. I had crossed a border unto an even greater shame of unethical attributes that I never imagined I had to bear in life. I was even more corrupt in the agony of my affair with the absurd than I was when I was cruel in the streets of my youth. Granted I still didn't remember what had happened. But it took a fool not to put the pieces together. I lived in denial about it as my ability to face the self of my broken brain had severed in the madness of not having a face. Almost believing what the doctors had theorized about it being a seizure or the result of my medication. But in my dreams that surfaced as I slept I knew the truth, as the landscape of my mind was a garden of surrealism that burned me at the stake of the absurd. In my waking hours I sensed people looking upon me as a liar, a fraud whose place in society had lessened even lower than that which I already knew myself to be. I felt good-for-nothing in the fetal position of a toddler that may as well have been sentenced to live in fear for the rest of his life as shadows of that which live in nightmares harassed the joke of my manhood. In the

silence of denial I had taken my self-esteem and that which I had always envisioned myself to become and distorted it even more than it already was. I couldn't have imagined it was possible to bend my mirror in more grotesque reflections, but I did it. In a man's world I was a delicate design in the coward of a bird that's flight could flee upon the footsteps of man. I was so afraid of taking responsibility for my actions and now it was too late as I chose to live within the lie that was never going to see me in the synergy of my soul. The disassociation of myself kept going further down that road where people knew more about me than I did. I led everyone including my family to believe that the restaurant was the one who did me wrong. To this day my mother still believes that I simply went to the bathroom that fateful night. Unaware of my drug abuse at the time, if she found out it would mean another concussion.

I had to take a medical leave from school when I suffered my head concussion. I was out for the rest of the semester. The damage to my thoughtless brain was severe in a lethal dose of splitting atoms that spread across the globe of a sudden slug. My frontal lobe was bruised badly in the rage of my machine as it may as well have been through a war, and I had developed blood on the brain as a result of God's fury. Eventually the blood dissipated for some reason. I don't really know how that worked and it didn't even matter to me. I went through a series of psychological and neurological testing to find out just how bad the damage was. The part of my brain used for spatial reasoning did exceptionally well. I did better than the doctor who tested me and

he was quite surprised by the results. I had a right brain IQ of 138. Yet everything else was just below normal. My left brain IQ was somewhere in the eighties, which couldn't have been worse for me in the great imbalance between the two hemispheres. I was practically two different people. One was a creative wizard of psychical elements that breathed the fire of acceleration as an organ within the chest of a passionate artist. Yet the other was slouched in sluggish thought that wasn't entirely thinking by the standards of most. I had extreme difficulty concentrating on two or more things. When asked to remember information as new information was being given to me I could not do it. I was distracted easily and often confused like a child that didn't understand the many variants of meaning within language. I was like this to a certain degree already, but it was claimed to be violently exaggerated by the head concussion. Despite my colossal mind of creativity I always thought myself to be fairly stupid to begin with, as the great imbalance in my brain was always a matter of having to play catch up with myself. But now it was so inhumanly disproportionate that I was virtually an idiot savant. It was painful to walk among the world in the retardation of my social belonging as my other half was always so concealed. But at the time having just been released from a mental hospital in which my face underwent a brutal scarring in return to the world a little brain damage didn't bother me. As far as I was concerned the dumber of myself deserved to drag his feet in the slowdown of his eventual drawing into the mouth of a black hole. And I liked being spacey to a point where I could flutter

about the waving energy of my eyes. What I should have been worried about were the emotional repercussions of bruising my frontal lobe. I was told that damage to that region of my brain could and would exaggerate my illness. Other than the headaches noticing changes in my behavior and thought patterns was difficult. It was partly because I was not looking for them but mostly because I did not care. Upon seeing a neurologist it was made clear to my mother that I was now a disabled individual. It was made clear to her because I was of an intelligence so degenerating that I couldn't have possibly understood the significance of the statement.

One form of therapy that was suggested to improve my cognitive skills was to work with the wonder that is the never-ending evolution of the computer. I was to enter a program for people who suffered head concussions. What we were to do on the computer I still do not know. I'm sure there were a number of neurological applications that tested and built upon the brain's ability to work itself out in the bench presses of cerebral training. Most likely forms of logistic puzzles that hurt the head in the heavy weights of thinking. I imagine that a computer game such as *Myst* in the surreal adventure of having to solve so many questions of more abstract reasoning serves the same purpose in testing the brain for its sheer intellect. The program fell through and I never discovered the functions that truly rebuild the brain in the process of strenuously warping it like wood in water. But my grandfather had always been a computer hobbyist. He already taught me the basics of the DOS and Windows operating system. I

often spent time with him using his computer. Though I wasn't truly efficient in programming I had the skills needed to learn quickly any software application. And I was able to use the machine as an extension of my own aptitude in creativity. I didn't work endlessly on the keyboard, as I did not always have access to the dead mind. But I believe it was eventually the union of my own reasoning in conjunction with manipulating the information of 1's and 0's that strengthened that portion of my brain which had seen its share of cessation in response to the pressures of having to think among men.

When the next semester rolled around I went back to school. I did so in a very confused and disoriented state that I'm sure my peers further recognized to be an aberration in a quaint order of evolution among the weaker links. I was extremely unorganized and my appearance began to look the part, as I didn't even know how to dress myself. I often wore the same sweatshirt day in and day out and couldn't bother with a mirror again. My hair was scruffy, unkept, and growing wild like a front lawn that no one tended. This was when I noticed the change that the head concussion brought about, as the ladder that I could have climbed in a social setting was now broken beyond repair. It was when I was back in social situations where I needed to function in dialect and interact with people that I now was having tremendous difficulty. Of course there was my illness, but now things were that much worse in a disfigurement that amplified upon the bleeding eardrums of my mirror. That is if I was to gaze into the face of the thing that I had become, as I never wanted to

know myself in the eyes of others. There were some people at school that favored my art, including teachers. But I was of a character that could not compensate for that talent in my personality. And it was personality that people admired more. I drifted through each day lost in the spaces in between the spaces that floated on the moon of masturbation in my art. And much of my art slowly began to grow into laughable works of irrationality that I thought to be intellectual. I'm sure that every artist has those periods where they experiment and as wonderful as they think they are when looking back they are stupefied by the naiveté of their work. I had to prove to myself in a way in some of my art that I had an intellect that couldn't be matched. It just didn't work and some of my pieces were reflective of the massive trauma to my head. There was no question that I had a good technique and a flare for design, but on the intellectual level that I was trying to cultivate I was of connections that couldn't be connected. You know your art is bad when even you don't want to look back on it. There were a few that were good in terms of bringing forth the surreal interplay of imagination between the art and its viewer, but not many. And I couldn't develop my own style as I built many log houses that I never finished and left acres of land with nowhere to live. I never did do another piece in school that was quite as good as the first drawing that brought me so much attention. But at the time of my disorientation I thought I was a genius with my art. Teachers reinforced this for me and I had to imagine that I did have talent even

if I wasn't at the top of my game. But while I was there I never came close to what I now hold in personal opinion as a masterpiece.

Everyone at school knew about my head concussion, which made me extremely self-conscious of my surroundings and a bit paranoid. I only mentioned it to a couple of people, which spread like a virus exemplifying the ridiculous structure of everyone's need to know what made my mind go in the gears without teeth. "That explains it." One student jokingly said. But I think too that word about my hospitalization got out. My family was not discreet about my hospitalization, as I had asked them to be. My brothers knew and soon, so did their friends. I remember sitting in my youngest brother's room as he joked on the phone with one of his friends about me being a schizophrenic. If my family wanted to destroy my life they were definitely good at it. My anonymity within my world had now been given an even more peculiar expression. The illusion that I sometimes succumbed to in the madness of the *Truman Show* was grounded in the all too painful facts of people's ferocious tongues. I imagined that my illness was common knowledge and now I was meant to hide in the holes of society while I bore the shame of a psychotic. While in the hospital my father advised me to always tell the truth, meaning that I should be open about my illness. He was a hypocrite of prodigious proportions. And I was not an open person anymore. There was no reason why I should have been in regards to my illness. I didn't want people to know that I had suffered repeated breakdowns and checked myself into a mental hospital. I knew how

rotten and relentless the upright apes could be. I needed my privacy and now more than ever I wanted an island among the pacific. Somewhere where I could dedicate my life to an inner journey that never again need worry about anything but the siren of the sun as she shows her flame upon the water of my eyes. In school I worried about who knew what and every other day I had to face them in the humiliation of a disorder that might as well have been walking around without any pants. If just one person were to know than they all would. It was a small college and everyone knew everyone else's business. I couldn't help but imagine that I was in the obituary of the newspaper everyday but the world would not let me die. There was no escaping it. People don't know how to mind their own business and I couldn't help but feel that there were rumors circulating in speculation about too many things, which gave people a reason to avoid me. I became distant. People didn't trust me. As I walked down the halls to class I felt their eyes following me in the sideshow of myself that needed to be feared. In class people sectioned off into groups. I was often left alone and that was just fine with me. "More time to zone out." I thought. But really I wanted to be able to participate with the other students. I didn't have a friend in the world. The social interaction became that much more difficult and I had the stigma of a skunk. Be it in my own personal knowledge or exposed to the world - I could never tell.

I thought that being around other artists was going to be different and imagined it giving me the desired commonality to form

friendships. My impression of the creative mind seemed to be something of a bonding instrument. My art had always brought me closer to people in the desire to communicate with others. And it was a tool of the tongue that salivated imagery. In school we all shared a common interest in our creativity. But it was very much a microcosm of the art world in which we competed against each other. Egos tend to exaggerate among the creative process and my personality was not of a quality that fit into the cliques and circles of the beautiful people that many of them indeed thought they were. Of the students that actually had a talent worth praising was one that thought nothing of his skill. I greatly admired him not only for his gift as it incinerated the talents of the rest of us, but for his humble perception of what he could accomplish with it. He was a realist to the core and his technique was unsurpassed by even some of the teachers. But being the top student in the school he was not involved in the narcissistic mirror of his work as something that defined him in superiority to others. One teacher actually made a reference to my work being in his league, but I knew my touch was not of the same caliber and his presented a blaze of passion that I could not compete with on a level of realism. As moving as his work was he was the only one that took his art with a grain of salt and everyone else was very busy practicing to be important. Most of them put their personality before their talent as that which is the feet that climb the steps of life. To be an idiot savant as having a gift that perplexed into the mathematical equations that solve the riddles of the universe in offering humanity the grail

means nothing if you are an idiot. People wanted the complete package even if the talent was less than ordinary. There was one teacher I had that emphatically emphasized the importance in presenting a piece as that which determines it to be of value. In his opinion a piece of cardboard with a string hanging from it could have been a work of genius if such a piece had a presentation that spoke of the string in eloquence as a brilliant matter of existence. Such is the absurd in glorifying an ordinary chair as it sits in a gallery. Even in absurdity a true artist should bring forth degrees of quality and complexity that are meant to offer the mind more than just a blunt object. I remember that in his class I did one of the better designs as an abstraction of the texture that is on the Epcot Center. The students stumbled on it at as though I had brought them a visual anomaly to be perceived on LSD. But because I didn't build it with a presentation that put it on the pedestal of my own genius it was the only one in the class that wasn't exhibited in the teacher's lounge. The power of suggestion can do wonders for a work of art, but when you are suggesting the brilliance of the pet rock it's a bunch of bullshit. There was one person in my painting class that adored this philosophy as a way to make his inanimate gift a thing of gods that sat on Mount Olympus. He compensated for his lack of talent with his character and it worked marvelously in a way that irritated me beyond belief. His pieces were muddy and dull to look at, as they bestowed neither passion nor imagination. But he invented fabulous stories of his own dynamics as they moved more feeling than the work was capable of

on its own. Everyone thought he was a prodigy that some day sought a place among the greats of the museums. Surely he was going to become someone in his ability to present his personality. But an artist that actually had something to offer the world I doubt very much.

One painting he did was of an outline of a person lying in a fetal position. It was life size and filled with muddy colors that drowned it in the apathetic texture of an overly simplistic design. The painting was supposed to be a self-portrait. The outline reminded me of the chalk outlines that are used for murder victims and it stimulated that place in my imagination that could have cared less. I noticed the painting sitting in the front of the class one day and didn't give it a second thought. It would have spoke to me if it blazed in the technique of realism. But even as it was of the imagination it hardly engaged me in the interaction of surrealism. It was something that I could have done had I the desire to bore myself with the degeneration of my weaker brain. I didn't really have a problem with the piece and I normally never knocked someone's art, but when we had a critique it blew my mind how he could make the work so monumental. He gave an eloquent speech about his present life and how he felt sheltered in the comfort of his own concern, but for him it was imperative to work through the process of the piece and the presentation in an effort to change. Everyone began to feel deep sympathy for him and his presentation brought magic to the room. Suddenly they loved the painting that just moments before hadn't captured anyone's attention. I didn't buy it for a second and the piece

was even worse for having been mutilated in rhetoric. He put more preparation into the story as he pondered the cult of his personality in compensation for what was truly an uninspiring work of art. I had spent hours on end putting together a collage of different surreal artists. They filled the body of a man who was sitting in a yoga position with his legs crossed and his arms stretched out to either side as in meditation. On one side of the figure the background was filled with chaotic flames. On the other side there was an ordered spectrum of color in the shape of a half circle. We were all working on self-portraits and I was trying to order the chaos of my inner world. The teacher said that it was genius. But I didn't have the personality of an orator and the piece couldn't be built in conjunction with a detailed and fascinating story that kept the class captivated with a wild tale of insanity. And it shouldn't have had to been articulated with words as the piece spoke volumes alone and the interaction of the imagination was what told the story. Writing a book and presenting art within it is different as there is expected to be commentary on the work. But as art exists on its own the more potent pieces suggest the story within the islands of themselves. A good work of art should explain itself in the synergy of imagery and imagination on the part of the perceiver. Visual art isn't about telling stories with words and I'm fairly sure that is why it is called visual. But as I repeatedly learned in life it was personality that moved the gears of gifts to a greater plane of grace among the Gods. Unfortunately I didn't have character that those

among the world could like. My deep introversion wasn't fit to walk about the Western World.

Reading into art is an unavoidable process and it is a way for a piece to be participated with. Some people take a work of art for face value without pondering the deeper meanings and symbols of a particular piece. Others try to read so deeply that they can go as far as to tell what kind of childhood the artist had. The greatest works of art are institutes of laws that fly apart like bees and reorganize into the wisdom of beards upon the face of the perceiver. To create a work that when gazed upon allows a sudden series of realizations or epiphanies is what characterizes a masterpiece in my opinion. But the line between objective and subjective interpretations can often be blurred. Or so I have found to be true when I look at art. People have their own schemas that they have accumulated throughout life in their personal knowledge and interpretations vary in individuality. I believe a piece of art does portray an objective reality that is only of the artist's own mental substance in its purest form. This basic nature of the mind in its various states can be communicated directly with illustration. But more importantly for the sake of fascination it should evoke a subjective mental process that dances with the truth of a work's actuality. I never limit my own art in my perception of it to one layer of meaning. And as has been true with my work its message grows aside me as my life adjusts to new frontiers. But for the benefit of others a good work of art should be like a cubist substantiality that speaks its many mirrors upon the differences that

spread across the realms of our many realities. A painting of a blunt commodity in its straightforward speech of meaning can not be denied, but still it amasses associations that are unique in the movement through our personal space. I am often asked what my art means and it is a question that has always been denouncing of the point to entice the questioners own imagination in free association. But because art can operate on so many levels of rendering the external of a cake which is sometimes just a cake there erupts a lot of nonsense. Work can easily be misunderstood in convictions that are so strong that the artist is called upon to defend his or her work in the court of the absurd. Artists sometimes say things unconsciously through their art. But also negative interpretations are common as the artist's intentions are occasionally misunderstood. And the worst of the matter is that they are proportioned to be ridiculous even when there are never any intentions.

Working among a community of sorts that competes in creation you tend to learn more in experience of your work when your up against the wall of distrust. Once in my Life Drawing class, a model came in to pose. She slightly resembled the teacher from my first drawing class. She had a slim figure with short brownish hair and was in her mid-forties. I didn't notice the resemblance until later on and the two of them never appeared to me to be that comparable. Anyway, I drew a picture of her using chalk. I took the drawing home and finished it up as I was coming to see a mood within the

appearance of the model that was somber. Her manner was descriptive of a melancholy that I couldn't escape in her pose. It wasn't a masterpiece of multiplying phenomena, but it captured the complexion of sorrow that I saw in the model and I was pleased with the way it came out. The next day I brought it into class and displayed it on the wall. There was an awkwardness in the room and the teacher smiled uneasily. Because I used chalk the skin tone of the model was very pale and white. The teacher who gave the assignment began to critique it and talked about another artist that made his figures look like they were deceased by using pale skin tones. I thought nothing of it at the time. I was happy with the way it came out. I didn't see the connection until the next semester when one of the students struck up a conversation with me and mentioned that the piece I had done was demented. I didn't understand how so. He drew a portrait of the same woman. But people were always saying idiotic things to me and I was becoming accustomed to my own dwelling within the bubble that didn't bother with their nonsense. So I didn't give it much thought. But what he had said stayed with me and it eventually came to light in my mind.

This drawing was supposedly of the teacher that had first taken an interest in me when I started college. I had remained in contact with her. In my first semester she had talked about helping me to transfer to her former college. There were people throughout my life that planted the crazy notion in my head that in order for me to become successful as an artist I had to attend this glorious structure of a

school. And I had taken counsel with a psychic that exposed to me the fate of my gifts. She claimed in the vigor of her convictions that success was to come upon me in a suddenly violent thunderstorm. It was to dangerously overwhelm me, as I would walk upon the fire of a divulging madness in the mastery of my art. In fact, it was to put me in the hospital. She was so certain of the fortune that was to summon me into a new frontier that I couldn't doubt her aptitude of sight. I was unexpectedly joyous, as I believed so passionately in the power of vision from which the mind has into the prophetic certainty of our paths. But I was also terrified as a fate was foretold from which I felt I could not detour from. I was not of a character that had a clue about how to prepare for such a disaster of success. And the fact of my victory in life, which I believed so fervently in foolishness, was claimed to happen much sooner than I expected. Even if there was no truth to the powers of the seer the strength of her suggestion was enough to catapult me into the undeniable belief of such a destiny, which I some day would discover in my creativity. This prediction was so monumental that if my life did not hold meaning enough I was now to someday rush face first into the torrential rains where my artistry was to perform my own crucifixion. How in the name of the greater good was I to prepare for something of this magnitude as was so well planned by the gods as they played the puppets of my talents? I had no idea how this was going to unfold and was still of an age that had so much to learn. My tragedy was impatience as I could imagine success even sooner than the psychic was able to predict. There had

to be a path among which I could walk upon the halls of this school where my imagination could blossom in the growth of fruition. There was a greater chance of being discovered within the walls of this institute if only I could get in, and I was in a sudden hurry to go someplace other than down. This was news that contradicted all common sense about my situation in life, but the Cinderella of my art was always a work of miracles and I knew it so seriously. I had a talent that walked about in its sleep for long durations of dull and dreary designs. Yet I also had a talent that could be explosive in the splitting atoms of my imagination, as was a power within me that could leap upon the sight of a monolith into the evolution of pure thought. My misfortune was to hope too soon upon the belief that I had strength in bringing me success immediately, and such a calamity holds the potential for a greater success upon the road of painful lessons. There is a much more important fortune to be sought in something different than the wealth of secularity. I would eventually realize that in the end and of treasures I would be the richest man on earth.

But for now I was gung-ho to run face first into a wall and scar my face yet again. I had set up a meeting with my teacher to view my portfolio for submission to the school. I met with her at her house to show her my work. We went through each of my pieces and she critiqued them the way an art professor from the university would have. She practically tore me apart and said that in order to go to her former school I might have to do some things that I didn't really want

to do. This was a teacher talking to me as though I should have learned to open my mouth wide and invest in kneepads if I wanted to realize my goal. We came to the drawing that everyone thought was of her. I hadn't thought much about the piece and never paid too much attention to the gossip that went on at school. But I knew right away that she thought the same thing. She said that it reminded her of a son pushing away from his mother and that I should be careful about what I was trying to say with it. It was too much. This was a subjective interpretation that was out of control like a mass hypnosis. To me it was a simple drawing of a model that came into the studio to pose. Nothing more, nothing less. I wasn't trying to say anything. It didn't even remind me of my teacher but people wanted to read into it as though I had proclaimed a statement that shouted her name. Everyone made such a big production of it and I was the only one that didn't have a clue. That was because I shouldn't have. It was common place to dig deeply into my art simply because I was odd and my art was risky. I didn't say anything to her and she didn't ask me if it was supposed to be her or even give me the benefit of the doubt. I left it alone. This was another time in my life where I could not confront what people thought of me. And people were forming some fairly ridiculous assumptions. Looking back I know I should have said something. To make things even worse as I was leaving her house she mentioned when she first met me. "Those were honest times." She said. "Yeah." I said in agreement. "I dare not be honest about myself in today's world." Is what I thought. Had I been open

with people I'd never have a chance of going anywhere. Besides, I don't know what she expected me to be honest about. I didn't owe her any explanations about my situation in life. It was none of her business if I had to take medication or if I was suffering from depression. The fact of my head concussion was none of her business either, and my life outside of school was no ones concern but my own. I was expected to be open with a community of people that I didn't know when I already had suffered repeated humiliation for being myself. I preferred my own company for a reason and it was one that need not have been of any concern to her. But some dispute of my character led to the expectation that I should have been mingling with the rest of the crowd. I never would have asked her for help if she didn't originally offer it, and there was never a need for her to look upon me as a liar in relation to my artistic life. Any fact of my past was not relevant to my ability to succeed in school. I had a 4.0 grade point average and had virtually breezed through the creative end of my degree like an authority in virgin territory. But much of my art could not help but reflect the fragments of my illness and because so I was a suspect of suspicion.

Even though I didn't intend the drawing to look like my former teacher I couldn't help but wonder if there was something going on subconsciously because of what everyone else thought. It was very possible that this was an expression of the student teacher relationship; eventually, the student leaves the teacher and goes out into the world on his or her own. Very much in the same way that a son would leave his mother to venture into adulthood. But even today when I look at the drawing I don't see my former instructor in it. Now that I look back I regret having asked her for direction. She said some things to me that were helpful in guiding the future of my work. She was insistent upon the heart as the organ of sight that transmits the magic of an image. Much of my work was removed from the inner core of my personality as I was drifting away from myself. But I should have been more conscious of the popular opinion that continually established me as a creative delinquent in my art.

Shortly after my teacher reviewed my portfolio, I took her suggestion and enrolled in a summer class at the art institute. The class was just a way to get acquainted with the feel of the school. I thought it was a fairly good suggestion that I get an idea of what the community there was going to be like if I planned to pour the concentration of my soul into the acceptance of my work. My teacher had set up a tour of the school for me with a former student from the community college that had transferred. She showed me around the entire campus and I was truly impressed with much of the work that the students were doing. I was also very nervous about unfolding my talents among those that were so skilled at their crafts, but I had a goal for the first time in my life and I was actually thinking about my future. I was ready to realize the dreams of my childhood and believed in innocence of the praise that people had always had of me. But in the overall structure of my development I was painfully naïve and it showed like a wart upon my nose. The lapse into the bowels of my illness in conjunction with my head concussion made this a matter in which I appeared to be a clown. That was always the self-image that I couldn't escape in my afflictions and people often reinforced it for me throughout my life. But being suddenly focused on a destination I didn't imagine there was a way in which I could get into trouble. I was hoping to purge my past in the promise of tomorrow where I was someday to reap the rewards of my gifts and shed this skin of clumsy clay. At the time I was twenty-one and legally able to drink myself into a comma. I had acquired an awesome power by the

act of good old Uncle Sam. I wasn't ready for it. I wasn't sure if I was ready for the class either, but it was just a class and I couldn't imagine that I didn't have the ability to utilize my talents and learn something within the course. My life seemed to be leading up to this very moment ever since I was a toddler in the creation of crayons. I had always wanted to go there. From when I was a child people earnestly believed that I one day would. "That's your ticket out of here." People would say in regards to my art. By taking this class I imagined I was taking the first step towards the rest of my life where the memories of madness in the disappointments of life were to suddenly flower in the beauty of my gifts. Before I took the course my teacher suggested that I sit in on one of the classes first, to get an even better feel of what it was going to be like within the walls that structured the clay of creativity. I talked with one of the receptionists at the college and she informed me of a class that I might enjoy evaluating. I entered a room where a former pupil of the school was displaying his work for the students. His lecture was centered on prostitution. He was an artist that gave his talents over to the will of others as they controlled his hand in the slavery of creation. I've learned in life that his analogy was fairly accurate and eventually came to the conclusion that if I was to ever use my gifts for anything in this world it was going to be on my own terms. I left the lecture early and had a fairly good idea of what was going to be involved in my time at the school. Everything went well and I didn't run into any problems until the first day that I started class.

Initially I made a point to talk to the professor about my head concussion and make him aware of some of my cognitive problems. It was the same as telling him that I had a learning disability. I also informed him that I was planning to transfer to the art school. When I sat in on his class he seemed a bit intense, but he also seemed nice enough not to worry about having a problem with. I always ran into rough situations with male figures in my life, but I was hoping to catch a break. After telling him about my disability he looked me dead in the eye and said, "You had the balls to sit in on one of my classes. I don't care about your head concussion. You're the local kid around here and I'm going to embarrass you and humiliate you any chance I get." Then he asked, "Are you familiar with the term riding the eight ball?" "Yes" I smiled. "You're riding it." He said. I just smiled nervously and said, "OK." I didn't really know how to take it, but I expected as much from a man. I'm certain that if he was a woman I might not have had a problem. He got right in my face and he was very serious about all of this. He was so intense that my face flushed and the only directions my thoughts could take were fleeing from themselves in fear. He really didn't like me coming into his class as though I had personally offended him and pissed on his precious territory. It was as if he knew of me before hand and he decided that he was going to be the one to punish me for the shortcomings of my life. I thought it was very strange, but then again I had been so conditioned to expect this type of treatment that it appeared a normal fact of my life that nothing could be done about.

It's very sad when I think about it today. Because at the time I felt that people were always justified in this type of behavior. It was to a point where it seemed as though I never even had the right to stand up for myself. I was weak and I deserved to be punished as my father might have had me believe. I suppose my relationship, or lack thereof, with my father precipitated this problem I continually had with men. They were the diseases upon the species and they proved it to me time and time again. Women have every right to hate us. There have been very few men that I've met that have adhered to the honorable traits of masculinity, and role models have been rather hard to find. To me something like this was not as unusual as it should have been. It was almost expected behind every corner that I took in the misery of mankind as they came to life from the grave. I never knew who was going to shit on me next, but my fears were always given a face. My parents, but mostly my father, had not brought me up to have any self-esteem. And the circle of friends that I once knew destroyed any self worth that I did find. My importance upon the thin ice of life had come to be defined solely in the solace of my art. And now that was going to be destroyed by this man who wanted to see me publicly humiliated.

I had to draw myself naked for my first assignment. After giving me the project he said, "Lets see how you feel about being naked." I couldn't believe this guy was actually serious. Soon I came to realize to what extent he would go to humiliate me. To the saddest degree of my understanding I deserved to be ashamed before the majesty of my

peers as they snickered about the task that was to engulf me in ridicule. Because I so enthusiastically wanted to go to the school I did the work and I did it to the best of my abilities. But I seriously don't doubt it if he expected me to perform oral sex on him in front of the class just so that I could one-day walk among the corridors of his precious institute. I was an easy target for the other students to joke about. And they did joke about me as they pledged allegiance to this pathetic excuse of a man. It was only the first day of class and I was already the laughing stock of the entire school as I bent over and let everyone emasculate me. I had so many hopes that were riding this man's eight ball in his perverted game of pool. This man was himself an artist and I thought so naively that all artists were among the bleeding hearts and poets that showered the world in the passion of their soaring spirits. I had an impression of creators as those that brought forth the best of humanity. But it was far removed from the actuality of what went on inside the walls of where we were learning. And the ethics that ran amuck among the cloth of this college were somehow situated differently than the rest of society. For some reason artists had a poetic license to do whatever the hell they wanted at this wonderful world of societal degradation. And it seemed that this was normal for some very bizarre reason in the doorway that I had crossed unto the nightmare of my own naked shame. For the next assignment I had to do a series of self-portraits. When I asked what he wanted me doing in the self-portraits he said, "Why don't you depress us." I shrugged this off, but even still such a comment was

typical of what I expected to hear from people as I had heard so much of the hatred that fills the hearts of men. I did the self-portraits, as I so eagerly wanted to direct my life into the heart of a future that walked where there wasn't my disease. But the circus continued.

I worked all week on the self-portraits. They were dismal and depressing. Not because he asked me to do them that way, but because I felt depressed. When I first started the class he told us all that one of the things we would need is a positive attitude. Hmmm...How was I supposed to accomplish this? The drawings were representative of the situation that I found myself in with the instructor. They were not masterpieces of intellectual prowess or design, but they were heavy psychological situations that were honest and expressive. He wanted to see me nude so I showed him the naked truth of the situation he put me in. I wasn't necessarily conscious of it but the circumstances were so overwhelming to me that they couldn't help but show through in my art. When I brought the drawings in for a critique one student was rather impressed at how expressive I could be. But because of the depressing way in which I captured myself I seemed to have offended some people. Not everyone was thrilled that I shoved myself down their throats in the sheer honesty of how I felt. I later asked the professor what he thought of them. He gave me some constructive criticism when he told me that I was working too much with clichés. But then he went on to say, "You are a lazy thinker. And you need Prozac." My positive attitude went right out my ass. I told him I suffered a severe head concussion. But this man

took pleasure in insulting my disability. And he acted as though he was justified.

One day when I was in the studio I struck up a conversation with one of my classmates. She was a student from another country. The school was popular around the world. It was a long time ago and I can't place her accent. But I think she may have been from Sweden, or Switzerland, or some other country that made me dream of exotic tongues in the talk among the forests that whispered a worldly psyche. The turn on of a foreign accent always worked me into a frenzy of fire that lit itself beneath the souls of my feet as I walked with joy even for a brief moment among the language of a female. The wrapping sounds of vowels and consonants within the play of my ears would weaken me into the heart of a boy upon the bosom of his brilliant discovery where a woman was to be worshiped for her cavernous core. Such a place held treasures of splendor in the desire to be closer that I could sense them shining through in the expressions of vocalization. Femininity is such a joyous bearer of deliverance unto salvation that to capture in words the wonder of a woman is a task I wish I could do forever. I hadn't actually talked to a woman of my own age in years, or at least not one that I felt I had something in common with. She was rather attractive and the hair underneath her arms excited me in the wilderness of her wondrous travels from a land where the natural beauty of a woman was to be adored for its growth within the garden. The thought of someone coming from anywhere other than where I lived always turned me on and the breast of an

alien encounter captured me in the wisdom of her speech. She was into abstract expressionism and was working on large pieces at the time. I found them to be so fascinating that I had to explore the terrain of her mind in the courage to talk to her. I wasn't familiar with that type of artwork and it was playing a masquerade of imagination within the many colors and shimmering shapes. I wanted to know the reasoning behind it and I could have almost touched upon her psyche in the depth of the paintings alone. I would look at one and see deeply many things that I wasn't truly sure were there or not. And I was stepping into a world unto the wisdom of her inkblots where she suggested to me the many possible phenomena of the mind in its state of preposterous ideation. I was certain that she was doing something subliminal as I could see images of body parts in what seemed to be random designs. I asked her about that aspect of her work and had to imagine that she was working within something of a dismembered memory that scattered about in the epistemology of our souls. She told me that there was nothing subliminal going on and that people always try to look for familiar images in random patterns. I didn't take her word for it, as I should have. I was one to believe on the contrary- that artist are less likely to create a random pattern as they are more likely to work with images that they know, be it intentional or not. She explained that the paintings she was working on were supposed to be of emotions. They were designs of how she felt at the time and by the wisdom of frequencies, which were colored in the blotted forms of her transmissions, she felt very deeply about many

things. She was the work of a wonder in the darkest region of my own naked shame. And she felt her words upon my ears in a way in which they were placed peacefully in sincerity. She was a woman that hovered in grace above the nonsense that was befalling me. Of angels I had to imagine that they walked among the living in our moments of need.

I don't know what it was about talking to her. I had strolled along the garden in the elegance of a feminine mind that expressed so much to me in her art. All of a sudden I felt my mood shift in the soothing silk of having been spoken to upon the heart of my own equality. A woman actually held a conversation with me without laughing or being rude, and of my encounters with women in which dialogue occurred I had never known one to share a common thread of creativity. But more importantly I had never known one to share the sincerity of herself. Suddenly I felt that maybe I actually was one of the other artists in the class, as I too could walk among the clouds of creative harps in harmony with life. That yes, I too was a human being for that brief moment in which I danced with the tongue of a dialect that caressed me in the consonants and vowels of a close encounter. I was actually someone that deserved to be treated with the same respect as everyone else. The painful truth was that the stress of my situation in this class was disastrously playing upon the disability of an agitated brain. But I wasn't in the company of my teacher who thought more to punish me for my situation in life. I was among someone who seemed to genuinely like me and talked about her art as

though we were friends. I adopted her philosophy of painting what I was feeling. I applied it to my self-portraits. And I did so in the complete and utter breakdown of having been plagued with this man's shotgun in my face. I did about eight of them in a row. They were all caricatures of myself. I was definitely letting off some steam and frustration with the class, as well as trying to have some fun with it. It was a very civilized way of telling the teacher to go fuck himself. When he came into the studio I showed him my drawings with great pride, as they were no better than doodles. I knew they were goofy and idiotic, and that was the main point, as I didn't really care. I was trying to make light of a situation that I found painfully difficult in the naked truth of my art as the instructor would have had me shamed before the world. He took one look at them and thought the drawings were an absurdity of astronomical proportions in the great joke that God plays upon the puppets of our humility. He continued to lecture me in the fire of an intensity that saw me naked before his almighty presence as the wizard of a wretched nightmare. I was frustrated like a soldier at attention that had to take his sergeant's abuse, and I tried to ask him in the best way that I knew how to get off my back. I kept mentioning my head concussion in the hopes that he would respect the disability that I had and give me a fucking break. But my head concussion was a matter of my own guilt in which I wasn't strong enough to defend my disability. The weaknesses throughout my life brought me to this situation in which I confronted a rotten bastard of discipline that thought too much of art in conjunction with the

military. Instead of critiquing my artwork the way that he did with everyone else he was critiquing me - attacking every flaw that he could find in my character. I couldn't breathe without his criticism and I had to stand there at attention and take it from it. In the end of his observations of my inability to play his game of pool he tattooed his final blow upon the weakness of my disability. "You seem to be having difficulties with the childlike aspect of having a head concussion." He proclaimed in the concentration of his eyes as they pierced further into the heart of my humiliation. I couldn't handle it anymore. If I had a child complex it was not his place to point it out. My art may have taken a drastic turn towards a silly rebellion of having to be in this situation. And if my faculties had been damaged to a point where my ability to advance was handicapped this asshole was supposed to respect that. He was digging deep into my psyche and stressing me to a point of which I could not escape. Riding the eight ball had come to a furious end. In the middle of his sentence I started to see a pattern of pulsating colors as if my mind was on overload in the thin air of improbability. I passed out in the overwhelming shame of my naked psyche as he saw fit to disrobe me. When I came to I was lying on the floor. Everyone was gathered around me. The girl that I had just been talking to was caressing my forehead so gently with the warmth of a dear friend that sought to ease me as if I was voyaging unto death. I couldn't believe how kind she was as I was so certain that my painful humiliation was way too much to know the sweetness of such sensitivity. The act of her hand

in the swaying gesture of an angel comforted me in an immaculate honesty that I only knew of in my greatest dreams. When I came to and felt the sweet touch of her gentle soul upon the shattered glass of my eyes I gazed at her with a smile and asked, "Am I dead?" One of the students burst into laughter, as I was the character of a clown whose nose of glowing red could only bring a divine comedy for the entire school to watch. I smiled awkwardly in return and then laughed at my own question as my comedic bone was always an instrument that tried its best to bear the unbearable. But I truly did not find this situation to be humorous. I was humiliated and embarrassed beyond my own ability to even grasp the predicament and I thought quite soon as I awoke to hide my face from the world for the rest of my life. This was what the teacher was pushing for and he had succeeded with every force of intensity that he was capable of. I was so confused that I imagined I had run naked throughout the campus and as soon as word was to get out I may as well have. I hadn't fully comprehended what had happened to me, but this was to be a great shame that I could never forget. No one allowed me to move until the ambulance arrived. I wasn't even allowed the dignity of sitting up. When I was taken to the hospital the girl from class accompanied me and I cant express how human and true she was in the gift of her heart. I had always known people to walk with a face of many sides upon the posing of a question that scattered what was true. But in one of the most humiliating moments of my life there was an honesty of compassion that cradled the fragile child of my soul within

the pillows of purity. While I waited in the emergency room for a doctor she kept me occupied with stories about her previous boyfriends and she did well to make me smile. I was so out of it though and tried to keep my mind in gear with what she was saying. But it was just her presence that I adored, as she could have told me about bowling trophies and how they are made for all I cared. A woman could be such a work of wonder in the world to me at times that I found myself so submissive in the desire to be next to one. I still didn't know what had happened to me, and I was in a daze as if I ran face first into a brick wall of psychic energy. I told her that she didn't have to wait with me and that I would be fine. I didn't want her to have to feel as though she had an obligation to stay with me. But she said that there was no way she was going to leave me. I didn't know what to make of her, and I never before knew a woman could have such tenderness in her touch upon the hurt of my frightened fragility. Her words were like feathers that floated from the sky of her mouth as an orifice that sang gentle winds unto the ground of my humility. Everyone else went with the current of my teacher's wizardry in the ways of my embarrassment. And there she was by my side as though we had been friends for many years. She was very considerate and genuine, and I thought so fondly of her to forge a friendship. But I was in a position in life where I so awkwardly felt that such a thing was not of my ability to acquire, never mind maintain. After all I was stripped of the walls that held my security by a man that thought it best to put me through the

shredder. And though I originally felt comfortable talking to her I was now even lowlier in my life's stance beneath the structure of myself because he decided to get in my face.

After my visit to the emergency room the question of what happened was left up to my doctors. At the time I was seeing three different doctors: a psychiatrist, a neurologist, and a general practitioner. They all agreed that I suffered a seizure, which was the result of my head concussion. I was placed on Tegretal and diagnosed with Temporal Lobe Epilepsy. Nothing like this had ever happened to me when I wasn't doing drugs. It took me by surprise and it has never happened since. The type of seizure was never explained to me. But as I learned later in life they surface in many forms and not all are neurological, as some are the result of psychological stresses. The fact of the pressures that were placed upon me has led me to believe that it was a psychological seizure, which I was more susceptible to because of the trauma to my head. It was becoming evident to me that this school was not all it was cracked up to be and I wasn't sure what I wanted to do about the situation. Family members placed an unspoken weight on my ability to ride the eight ball also as I felt a lot of pressure to prove my worth to them. I had my grandfather trying to advise me but he didn't know the entire plot of the situation. I was never able to be verbally expressive about my problems in a way that expressed the realties of my struggles in clarity. That was my viscous handicap throughout life and one that I was to fight in great pain and loneliness. I had

voices coming at me from every direction and they were pulling me apart in the indecision of my path upon the future. I decided to try and stick with it for the sake of saving face. But what I really wanted to do was hide in my room until the door of death came upon me in the senility of my old age. I was dangerously confused about what was going on. A big part of me felt as though I was being put through the typical initiation as if I was pledging a fraternity and much of my masculinity was being tested as though I needed to prove my manhood in my ability to cope with the situation. I was so disoriented in my perception of the way I deserved to be treated that I thought this to be normal.

On my first day back to class I walked in five minutes late. The whole class stopped what they were doing and stared at me for a timeless moment of penetrating stakes that stabbed at the flesh of my naked shame. After the show was over and everyone got a good look at the freak that came flying in upon his confusion of what they were thinking everything went back to "normal". The first thing I did was thank the young woman who accompanied me to the emergency room. I approached her and in the awkwardness of the moment said, "I just wanted to thank you for coming with me to the hospital. I probably wouldn't be here today if you hadn't gone with me." I was the glorious king of faux pa as I sat in my electric chair and pulled the lever of my own oral expressions. I was more than confusing in the way I came across as I meant something entirely different. What I was trying to say was that I wouldn't be back in class. I didn't mean

that I'd have committed suicide, which is how I think she took it as such a look of surprise came upon her face as though I proclaimed her greatness in gracing me with her presence. She was a woman of greatness in many ways but I didn't mean to say it upon the slip that was misleading of my ability to handle the humility. Though if she hadn't stayed with me at the hospital there was no way I was going to face the class again. I will always remember the comfort that she brought to me in the shame of my disabilities.

Later on I went up to the studio to work on some more drawings. The teacher had advised me to work among the designs of a more simple arrangement in the still lives that keep artists out of trouble. I imagined my seizure was enough to warrant sympathy. I had hoped for a well-deserved break from the exposed embarrassment that was carrying my character through each day at the school. And I thought in the privacy of my mind to clothe myself once again from the people that knew of my psyche's constellation in the shame of my inner child. As I was on my way through the campus I noticed that one of the security guards was shadowing me. This made me unbelievably tense in the fathoms of suspicion that were surrounding me. I confronted him and bluntly asked if he was following me. His behavior was unwarranted. I wasn't doing anything wrong. He looked at me and said, "We're here to protect people like you." I had no idea what the hell he meant and I didn't bother to ask. I was so pissed off that they thought it was necessary to keep an eye on me that

I just walked away and went into the studio to continue with my work.

Later, my instructor talked me into seeing the guidance counselor at the college. Much of me felt as though my part in all of this was my own doing, as I deserved to be placed upon the cross before the school. I was already seeing my own counselor at the mental health center, but I was easily swayed by the words of others as I thought so much of those who sat above me to know what was in my best interest. He suggested that I bring my drawings in with me to show the adviser. She looked at them and told me a story about this one student who went there who was obsessed with a certain type of art form. I forget the art form, but that is not important. The student believed that he wasn't a true artist until he could do this one type of art. He labored throughout an entire semester on it. When he finally finished it and showed his teachers they just looked at it and thought it to be just okay, but nothing special. She attempted to make a comparison between that student and myself. She never even considered how adversely I was being treated. In addition she asked me repeatedly if I was doing drugs even after I informed her that I had my blood work checked at the hospital. I made a point of having the blood work done so there wouldn't be a question in anyone's mind. She tried to threaten me by saying that she could find out from the dealers at school if they had sold to me. I guess it was acceptable for her to associate with drug dealers but it would have been my ass if I had come into contact with one of them. I didn't think to ask what

these drug dealers were doing in the school. It seems to me that if you are known to deal drugs you're probably not welcome in any school, but this school had to be different. Hey, it was an art school. Everyone was allowed to be decadent. That is everyone except for me. Had I even a joint she would have come down on me like a vulture. I thought she was the biggest shithead. There wasn't a chance that I would ever sit in her office again. A therapist is supposed to establish a trust with the patient. You can't establish trust by threatening to find out information about a person's personal life from outside sources. She didn't believe me even after I told her that I had a letter confirming my blood work. It made me wonder what else she was going to doubt. I couldn't talk to her about anything and I knew how these people stuck together. I was going to be made to feel even more shame by someone that was skilled at reaching into people's heads. I don't know who was worse, the counselor, the art instructor, or the security guard. With the exception of that one young woman, the whole college was straight out of an episode from the *Twilight Zone*. I didn't matter if my instructor didn't like my art either. . That was no excuse for the way he abused me. I had a disability and he knew it. How I got the disability was of no concern to him. There was no justification. He had a responsibility as a teacher to show respect to his students. Instead he choose the weakest one and exploited my naïve character for his own personal amusement.

When I came back from the counselor my teacher asked me how I liked her. Then he asked, "Did you come back to the planet yet?" I wanted to smack the bastard across the face, but I was so timid in my ability to defend myself that I never knew how to react to things like this. So I continually took it, as there was no stopping him. I could have had a heart attack or a stroke and the next day he would have continued to malign me. My tuition for the course ended up going towards therapy. And I was in need of therapy because of him. He had me so convincingly believe that I was to be at fault for my inability to cope with his disciplinary style of teaching me humility. The circumstances of the course were accumulating into a circus of absurdity where upon the cloth of my character was never to be worn again in the world, and I was to feel ashamed for all of this. The serious nature of this started to sink more deadly into the doorway of my mind, as we were to exhibit our work to the public. This man was known to be quite a popular personality on campus. If I wasn't humiliated enough already his many followers were to watch me upon the cross as I bent over once again and let them all stick it to me in a riot of rapes. I had no idea what was going on, as I was so disoriented by this man and painfully slow because of my disability. But when it suddenly hit me that I was always the divine comedy to be played upon his stage of puppets I was furious.

I dropped the class in a state of having been angered within the mild retardation of my disability. I was finally convinced by family to do so after I was able to force my oral expressions of the situation

to the surface in the clarity of what was going on. I made a point of telling the teacher off, which I regret doing. I should have controlled my feelings and not let him get the best of me. With a stunned look on his face he just said, "Okay." My mother insisted that I write a letter to the president of the school to obtain an apology and get my money back for the class. The money for the class was a gift from my father. But she hounded me about the issue as though I owed her the weight of the world. Why couldn't I just roll with the punches? That was exactly what I wanted to do, but my mother wasn't going to allow it. Her influence over my life was monumental as she was always prepared to threaten me with exile into the desert of her disappointment. I felt so many times that she pulled upon me like a puppet in her show of what I should do. And the course of my destiny was never allowed in my own say in the freedom of will that I wanted as the man that I was verging on becoming. In my mother's mind she did the right thing by making me stand up for myself and by many opinions that gaze upon these words I should have praised her for teaching me to protect my character. But she was just as dominating as the teacher and I could have suffocated in the situation even more within her influence. My aunt has tried to convince me to write this as though my mother was a bear protecting her cub so that mothers will be able to relate more with this part of the book. She was indeed an overprotective mother and I appreciate her being there for me at a time when I was under attack for the naked shame of my identity. "You've always reminded me of Christ." My mother said to

me in regards to this situation. But she was projecting her Christ image onto me and I didn't necessarily want that complex. Nor did I want the predicament to be profound to such a degree in the nature of my nudity upon my crucifixion in the college. The truth was that I was old enough to die for my country and still had my mother interfering with my life. It wasn't her place. Everything in this book is honest and I write upon my feelings at the time. If I wanted to get this jerk off into trouble it should have been of my own desire and no one should have been bending my will to act upon a step that I may not have wanted to take. I love my mother, but she refused to allow me the freedom of my own decision and my own life. Even as I write this book she believes it to be a story that she lived, which it is not. I've afforded my mother a struggle of her own, but it is very different than the life that lingers in the reflections of my own eyes upon the memories of my fight. My mother has had a difficult time separating herself from the identity of my struggles and allowing me the freedom of my individuality. It has not been until the working of my words that I've so sincerely embraced the strength of my own being in its dance upon the reclamation of my masculinity. Be it as modernized as I can possibly imagine it is still that which is capable of overthrowing the great Satan of my insanity. But my mother didn't do this with my brothers as she thought so much to control only me in the weaknesses of my disability. She was furious as hell at what happened and thought to seek her own justice through my mouth. But I didn't care as much to cause a ripple greater than I could handle, and

I could easily have left it behind in the dust of a dying day. I really didn't want to make a bigger event of the situation and slap him across the face repeatedly in the truth of my words. Plus, I knew this man was a big shot and it was quite possible that there would be serious repercussions if I informed his superiors of his behavior. If I felt strong enough to take up arms and defend myself than so be it. But no one should have been manipulating me into another situation that I didn't want to be in. And maybe I didn't want to handle all of this to such a degree that could cost this man his job and leave me branded with another name upon my situation within the educational system. This was all just another headache that I wanted to go away. And as I was once told if I didn't learn to live with these headaches I was not going to be able to make it in the world. My mother was now becoming a big part of this migraine, as she was infuriated in her influence to make me stand when I felt only to fall. I gave in to my mother simply because I couldn't bear the weight of her subtle threats anymore. I wrote an unflattering letter about the art instructor and the abusive treatment that I had been subjected to and sent it to the president of the school. Not only did I write it, but I also put my entire being into and let my heart reign furious with the truth of what happened. I asked for my money back and for a formal apology. Instead of an apology I received a lawyer's letter stating that if I wanted my money refunded I would have to sign a release form. They said that they were sorry that I had a negative experience at the college but that they were not responsible for it. Yet at the same time

the form released the college and everyone involved in my ill treatment from all liability, legal action, wrong doing, and so on. Furthermore, I was not to discuss the release with anyone, nor, God forbid, sue the college. It was not the apology I was looking for but it was worded in a way that admitted guilt in the cover up upon my signing. One thing that I learned within the circus of this experience as I wrote the letter of disappointment was that I had a talent with words and I could move mountains with the reality of reflection. A new gift had been born unto my hands that would occasionally come to comfort and astonish me in the miniature man of my stupidity that I was often made to feel.

When I received the letter I just wanted to sign it and get it over with. I had been humiliated, but such was life. I really didn't want to relive it or drag it out into an even greater parade of embarrassment. But my mother again would not let the issue rest. She was forcing her will upon me as though I was still twelve in my inability to make up my own mind. I thought quite differently about what I wanted to do. But the fear of displeasing my mother often left me with the disastrous threat of rejection as her son. There were unspoken ultimatums whenever she decided to take hold of my hand and walk me across a street that I didn't want to cross. She never pulled this on my brothers and thought so much of only me to grip the tissues of my psyche into submission. I didn't want this kind of relationship with my mother and it almost seemed abnormal. She wasn't the Virgin Mary and I wasn't Christ, yet the birth of a new complex had begun.

I wanted someone whom I could turn to when I wanted support. Not someone who was going to shove it down my throat in manipulation. It was the same story as when I suffered my head concussion. I did not want to take the restaurant to court. But she had to step into my life when I didn't want her in it. And this was a time in my life when her help was hurting. Not because I shouldn't have written the letter, but because I should have been allowed to make up my own mind without her interference. Perhaps if she suggested to me to do something I would have felt differently, but she used her power of will to control me like an invalid. The situation with the restaurant was very different, as I was so disabled in my ability to think of what to do in accordance with my responsibilities. But this time I was capable of making my own decisions. And though this man humiliated me I was not one that wanted to carry the fury of my soul forever into the turbulence of a tomorrow that never thought to let me forget. This was definitely not something I wanted to be reminded of for the rest of my life. I "decided" to meet with a lawyer to see what my options were. I gave him a copy of the letter that I sent to the college. I also brought all of the drawings that I had worked on while taking the class. He said that I had a very strong case and that if I were to take it to court he would crucify the teacher for the way he treated me. I didn't realize how strong my case was until he suggested that I sue for a million dollars. I had the impression that what I went through was so normal in the course of my life that I couldn't have possibly have had such a case against this man. And I

didn't realize that what he was doing was that serious, as so many people were ready to pull the same shit on me. This was just a fact of life that I was learning to live with. I never imagined I actually had the right to punish someone for it and gain something so substantial in the process. But there seemed to be many people that thought differently. The lawyer was very impressed with my artwork. Being a man who was gifted in the language of law he told me how envious he was of people who had an ability to express themselves creatively. He offered to take my case in exchange for one of my works of art. He wasn't the stereotypical lawyer you might see on television. At least I thought so in the passion he had for the case. As he examined my drawings he began to tell me a story of a young man who was in a similar situation as me. The young man was a homosexual. A lawsuit may have jeopardized his character. So instead he let the matter rest. I didn't want to be in his office to begin with. And I didn't want to be someone who made a living suing people. I did so once and dishonestly. I didn't need that kind of reputation. Yet, I considered everything he said. I weighed my options and decided that I didn't want to go through the process. Experiencing it once was enough for me. In a million-dollar lawsuit against a prestigious college my entire character would have been brought into question. My previous history of drug abuse and mental illness may have been exposed and my credibility would have been under attack. Plus character witnesses from the class would have been brought into trial and I couldn't imagine many of them testifying for me. And having a

mental illness anything I said was so sketchy upon the truth in many opinions that they could have had me believing I was delusional. Which I wasn't, but lawyers have a way of wording you against yourself. I didn't need to go through that as though I was to be forever scarred as a nut. My case would have been publicized throughout the state. There were a lot of factors that came into play in my decision not to sue. I was unable to handle the emotional strain on me. I felt that after such a lawsuit I'd never be able to go into another classroom again and I would have been publicly humiliated to the greatest degree I could possibly imagine. I signed the release and I did so under the duress of being exposed. I just wanted this to go away. I did everything my mother wanted me to do and was no longer overwhelmed by her overbearing nature. Later she said in regards to taking me to the lawyer, "I just wanted to show you your options." What she really wanted to do was force options upon me. I was now officially an underground member of the art world as I made a stand against a man who happened to carry a fair amount of weight in the community. And in the humiliation that he subjected me to I thought never to create again.

As soon as the next semester rolled around I began classes again at the Community College. I realized that I had made a big mistake in signing the release and returning to school. I never would have been able to handle a trial, but now I couldn't even handle a classroom. I could no longer concentrate on my studies. My thoughts were flying about the air in a disability that had gone disastrously haywire. I felt

like everyone knew me as the student that couldn't handle his place under the pressure of the eight ball. And I was to be ashamed for having been so week. I was now naked in the educational system be it a matter of imagination or not. I imagined I could hear people's thoughts and my own were being transmitted without my authorization. I knew what people thought of me as their beliefs of myself screamed in their eyes of the unclothed connection to the shame of my psyche. I thought not only the teachers had a vendetta to single me out in the exposure of my shameful weaknesses upon the wall of my peers, but also that the students themselves thought to thrash me of any security I was capable of finding within myself. I believed that my incident at the art school had become public knowledge and that there was an underground network that lit up like a Christmas tree upon the sight of my presence in the academic arena. My experience there left me with a great deal of shame and an opinion that couldn't distinguish many from the higher or lesser traits of the human race. People were suddenly wicked in their wisdom of my weaknesses, or so I imagined them to be. As my teacher had taught me I was to be ashamed and to feel stupid. And worst of all I wasn't to know whether or not everyone sought to disgrace me. I almost had another nervous breakdown. The severity of my disability left me to linger in the shadows of an unnatural reality where to function in society was now a task of walking nude upon the walls of the world. I dropped out after the first day of class and thought to

pray in the privacy of my madness for a place among the living whereupon I would once again wield the steel of my integrity.

At the time of this great circus where my freak show was a forest that I found myself lost in, I was living with my grandparents. I wasn't getting along with my brothers and there wasn't truly a good bond of blood between us. My relations with them today are on more solid turf of strength, but I was always quite different then them and more of a seeker of sanity in the quest to regain the grail. I had depth to my character that they could never understand and the fact of my feminine qualities in creativity left me less of a man that they could admire. And my illness burrowed me beneath them in the face of a foreigner that ought not to be thought of in the wisdom that proceeded their age. They thought me a fool and I was to live with their perception for years. It was a painfully shameful image to bear, until that one day when I was to decide upon a miracle to claim my masculinity. It was to take a giant leap of faith to bring myself into the bravery of my growth as a man that took responsibility. Also my relations with my parents were under the water of whirlpools that sought to drown me in the tearing forces of deciding between them. They were always fighting and I couldn't bear the bickering to the point it was reaching as the house was collapsing in on itself. I felt like I was in the middle of it and so did my brothers. My father was apparently giving in to a mental illness of his own that went undiagnosed and denied throughout his life. He had some type of mood disorder and it was aggravated adversely by his occupation. He

worked at the states correctional facility for young men and there were horrors upon horrors that he knew of day in and day out. Work like that had a way of hardening him and robbing his easy nature in our perceptions at home. We all walked on edge whenever he was around and his moods were giving in to the madness of the moon as he was going through something that none of us understood. The whole house was in turmoil. The insanity of the whole situation was not conducive to my mental health. I had been there for what seemed like an eternity between the two of them and their bitter war. My mother was constantly threatening divorce, and looking back I don't blame her. I love my father, but he was never able to look at himself and it was often very sad to see him so weak in his mind as he had been through some serious traumas. He never dealt with them properly and it affected all of us. The house was a horrible place to be. Intense arguments seemed to erupt everyday. I hoped and prayed that they would finally get a divorce and put an end to the bullshit. But my father would never have let her go. He might have benefited from therapy, but instead he found solace in the work of religion as his beliefs provided him with an honorable persona that was far removed from the disarray of his place within the home. I praise my father greatly for being able to work in such a dreadful place. I imagine it has taken great courage and it has also aged him incredibly. He was always responsible as a provider and I admire that in him. But he wasn't entirely someone that I wished to emulate in my perception of him growing up. And as far as my mother was

concerned I needed to establish some distance between her and I for the sake of my growth. It was hard for her to understand this as even when I did move out she had a hard time giving me that space. Living with my family was never a place for someone like myself to maintain my sanity. My parents didn't give me the attention that I needed. I realize I was now in my twenties, but at this point in my life I needed some guidance. And my parents were never good at that. So I left. With my grandfather I imagined I would receive clarity. The whole situation with the school was a disaster that I didn't need during this transition. It left me painfully scared in a new place of wizardry before the Indian chief of my family who had in mind to practice his medicine of my manhood. But when my grandfather found out that I had dropped out of the community college he was very disappointed. I didn't have a job either so that made things that much worse. After the incident at the restaurant I wasn't able to find another job. I felt worthless without a doubt in my position of a prison that now barred me from mankind.

Surely the psychic had no idea what she was talking about and perhaps I should have never headed her prophecy. But that vigor of a victorious success crashing down upon me in the suggestion of her powers was to remain in the back of my mind during even my darkest days. It was a fool-hearted hope for someone like me. But had I the strength in my art and the fire in my heart the possibilities of my potential might have been there to surprise me someday. In this book the possibilities have astounded me, but such prospects should be

tamed in realistic terms of humility in the face of an Originator that rounds us to the beginning of our birth, as is the greatest destiny of us all. Though having someone confirm a secular destination that I dreamed of in childhood in the wonder of my art upon the wall was enough to keep me from committing suicide, which I thought of daily in my disability. Even in the dingiest dungeons that were to destroy my self-respect I had a purpose borrowed beneath the sands of time. And time itself was promised to praise me in the alchemy that would mutate such sand into the gold dust of a destiny that rendered a reality of redemption. Such a hope always gave me the will to continually rekindle the flame in what I could still hold of the blazing spectacle that etched its joy in the tissues of my mind. There was a light so glorious beaming through the cracks in the doorway of death that awaited me to someday solve the combination lock that kept me from opening it. And there was a pledge made to me many times over in the acceleration of a kinetic energy. The breath of the great Originator in the splendid orgasm of my mind's onion was so warm in the many words of love that had never been spoken. I was graced with an immaculate afterward upon the clumsy clay of this life. And so being it made the tunnel worth my travels even in the torment of my personality, as time was to find fire upon many of the stones that I stepped in the illusions of what was sound.

What I was to do with this vision of joy was still a mystery and I was a detective with clues scattered in every direction as they wished me unto worlds that I had to embark upon in the holy fool of my

heart. And I was even more a fool in the minds of men as they circled about my sensitivity with swords and shields of barbarism. I now had all the time in the world to dwell about the things that spun in the poetry of my passions, yet I felt like everything was closing in on me. The head concussion really threw me out of sync and so did the incident at the art institute. I was finding it increasingly difficult to be around people. I was at a point in my life were trying to succeed in this world meant taking gut wrenching and humiliating leaps into the dark of society where man was an ogre beneath the bridge of my heart. And as being a man myself I wasn't meant to have a place above the bridge in the gentle winds of my words and the delicate movement of my hands upon creation. I had failed in the arena of my art and if I didn't belong in that world with the only gift that made my life worth living then I was doomed to be damned about the dead of the living. I didn't belong anywhere and creativity had abandoned me for a new place among the hatred of men. Even the familiar faces of my family had been through the electric storms of time in the metamorphoses of aliens that they now were. Granted I was young, but I had already become a failure in building my hopes to high and watching them crash onto the rocks of reality where I was to be ashamed for the weakness within my fragility. I was filled with an aching dishonor that made even my family relations unbearable. After all, I had fallen short of the one goal that I had in this world that might have redeemed myself in the eyes of my family and offered myself an identity of artistic integrity. I felt that my life was over in

society once and for all and I was to be the sickness of my disease in the severed limbs of my mind for the remainder of my earthly journey. All I had was hope, but it seemed so certain to me that I was never to find another chance to ride upon the untamed fire of that horse. And it was his wild whinny and hellish hoofs whose vessel was the only path unto the salvation of the sun. My only recourse in life was promised to be maddening in the alchemy of my art. I didn't want my life to be covered in the cloth of so much meaning in the maze of my fate. But the guides were always to give me new eyes to graze across the land and to greet the gods with the fire of my mind. Such things could not be escaped and I was to know the road whether I wanted to or not.

And so I found myself to discover luck in the chance that was soon to develop. My being was to ride upon the wind of a life that was of an eerie magic in molding my manhood. It was two of my uncles that sought to take me upon the train that traveled through the countryside of life and brought me back on course with the mystery of fate that I was to solve. They owned their own roofing business and offered me work in the sympathy of my situation. I desperately needed the money and something to do with my time. Especially something that was going to make my grandfather proud of my ability to adjust in the working world. I admired my grandfather greatly and looked up to him with a childlike innocence. To me he was a brilliant man who knew the meaning of life. Someone I was able to talk to about moral and ethical problems. Even if I wasn't entirely able to be

open about my past I let the seeds of his wisdom grow in the importance of family and the need to build better relationships. He was someone who knew all too well the quirks and odd behaviors of the human being. And he was a very compassionate man who loved me unconditionally, as he never turned his back on me in times of need. So despite my frail physique and my weakened mind I worked. And I worked like someone who was out to prove something.

I thought the hard labor was going to be the least of my worries. I always had good work ethics when my mind was clear and I wasn't feeling sorry for myself. I was a very hard and efficient worker when I wanted to be. My grandfather taught me that in the early stages of my adolescents and now I thought to prove to him how his work in me had paid off. But I quickly learned that on the job my uncles were not the same people that I had known my entire life. They made sport of busting me up as though I was a worthless worm in the weaknesses of my character. I worked even more furiously upon the times that they walked on me, but it was almost as if they were trying to degrade me in order to break my spirit. They thought me to be every bit the holy fool that I was. And I was the turtle of masculinity upon the race with the hare that never had a chance in many an ignorant opinion that forced me further within my shell. But this was work and I was happy to have money. So I didn't give them the pleasure of seeing me down. And I didn't let myself believe that I was one that couldn't compete with this crude and ignorant thing I knew as man.

As I lived with my grandfather I continued with my personal journey in the privacy of my own secret world. It was important to me to better understand the mythology of my life in the meaning of my supernatural tendencies. I now had time to reflect without the savagery of what was my family life with my parents. I had a great deal of mythological monuments that were flowing fervently through my blood. The winding of my soul spoke to me of many ancestral relics relevant to the situations of my modernized dance in this dead society. And such a dance within the future of my present resembled the fate of generations long lost in their naked eyes upon the sun. An aunt had given me a very interesting book some time ago called *The Sun Came Down*. The book was of the teachings of the Blackfoot Indians and was filled with surreal stories of Creator Sun and the origins of the world. Many stories were filled with moral lessons that spoke to me in the dreams of their play upon the poetry of my life and gave me a sense of belonging in an epic of my ancestry. There were archetypal patterns that somehow paralleled my life situations and forewarned my future lest I was able to break free from the pattern and solve the riddles of the many generations that proceeded me. It was a book that offered me a mystery of what I was to do with the metaphysical world in the advancement of spirituality unto the road of redemption. I've never lost myself in a book in the way I did with this, and it burned me into the riddles of its language where I was to walk with the weary stride of the Blackfoot Indian. I had a touch of Indian blood and had always been interested in uncovering that part of

myself since my use of hallucinogenics and the mythical tattoo of my vision. I hadn't much but a trace of Blackfoot blood in me and a little Creek. But the vision of the woman that stood in majesty before me as she was within a whirlpool of glory was so profound. And it was so revealing of the ghost of her grace in my blood that I had no alternative but to delve into the mystery of my ancestry. I always felt that touch of fire within my blood predominating my psyche and I was of magic and mystery upon the world that I knew within me. I never felt the precedence of Italian blood that was so thick with my father. I was one to go on vision quests. I spent my free time roaming through the wild of the woods with my dog looking for signs in nature. I came to interpret my waking world as if it were a dream and nature held many of the mysteries that I could capture in a raw intercourse of reversion unto a more profound state of being. I was in every way an explorer of the wild where I would remember what it was like in the deepest layers of my psyche as my mind took to the garden of the earth in long walks away from the misery of mankind. Anything out of the ordinary held a significant meaning to me and I was a life that had surfaced from an ancient path. Even if it was only for these excursions I was a person of great value in the heart of the woods where I worshiped the ways of life in the beauty of its original design. I came to know a new identity in what nature had to offer me as such were miracles in the wisdom of untouched territory. And it was a joyous retreat into a world of wonder and imagination where I was important to myself as an integral part of the environment. I was

with the trees as though they had asked me to be a part of their palace in the architecture of life. And I was just another of the life forms in equality of the world as we shared the same space upon the raw power of our perceptions. At last I had found a place where I belonged and the earth was never to be my judge. I picked up the pen and began to exercise my imagination in the many combinations of words that decorate the circles of natures many designs. Writing bits and pieces of whatever came to me at the time as I walked among the leaves in the wind in my own desire to branch such treasures.

As I drifted slowly but surely into a subliminal world of mythology where I was to dream with my eyes open I happened upon one of my uncle's knife collections. I became enthralled in the scrimshaw that decorated the various knife handles in my uncle's collection. I touched upon a canvas that was remarkable for its fossil in the traveling tunnel of time. He always enjoyed showing off his collection and I had attended shows with him when I was younger. But now I saw a world in his hobby that allowed me a great opportunity for an artistic expression. And I thought so eagerly to express my heart upon the horse of an ancient wisdom. It had devoured me in a world of utter imagination and a loose relation with reality. I saw the stallion in his soaring road unto the sun of my redemption. And I was ready to ride him with the grandeur of a greater good until I crashed like the waves once again onto the rocks of reality.

Scrimshaw is an old art that is done on various types of ivory. The scrimshaw artist uses a small tool to scratch and stipple a design. The design is then filled with ink. I was interested in doing something similar and asked my uncle if he could get me started with it. He gave me some imitation ivory and for his birthday I did a scrimshaw of a knife that resembled a shark. He was very impressed at how quickly I was able to pick up the old art. He asked me to do one of his knives and also asked if I would be interested in going to one of the knife shows with him. He often went to the custom knife shows to display his knives and to trade. I agreed and started working on my first knife.

He gave me total control over the design and subject matter. I searched for ideas in a book on Native Americans. I needed to do something in tune with an identity that brought meaning to the new path I found myself upon. I was wandering in the retrogression to a place in time where people did not live among the dead. I was one that recaptured life in everything right down to the wisdom of the rocks and even the equalization of insects that lived beneath them. Life in all of its forms was rushing with a river of the same energy. In each of our basic properties upon the light of existence even the slug held the same spark of divinity that allowed it to be in the wonder of what is a miracle. The elitist stance that I once took as a human being on top of the food chain was transformed in a cocoon that was to love the so-called lesser life. They happened to hold the many great wonders of innocence and delightful simplicity, which suddenly

began to speak to me of my own relation beneath the stars. My complexity made me no greater and in the heart of the matter we were all born unto being in the same energy that allowed us life. For all purposes I was in touch with the souls of my great ancestors who came to teach me what it was to be alive once again. And they did so at a time when I was downhearted in the death of man as he waved his wand and drained the meaning from everything. In the naked truth of my place about this world I had an epiphany in the simple speech of nature upon my travels, this great mother was the womb in which I was to return. And the tongues of the trees in their rippled memories were to remind me of my own seed - so simplistic beneath the sun where every beginning lived in the equality of their own unique design. I could have learned nothing greater in this world than what I unearthed in my blood. The line only stretched back to one great great grandmother on my grandfather's side who was Blackfoot. And then there was another great great grandmother on my grandmother's side who was Lower Creek. But the blood was so potent in the potions that were mixtures of my mind. I was to lose myself in the imagination of weaving a world that I could embark upon in the magic of a revolving reality. I was like a tree and if there was a sign in nature that I couldn't possibly escape it was the fate of my roots in the ground of mankind. Even if I didn't have the answers just yet I somehow knew I was to rotate around the rings of my reflection and bear the fruits of my creativity. Such was a destiny that the stallion of salvation sought to carry me to in the leaps of my imagination. I

wished to ride unto a world that was filled with the romance of adventure in the avenue of creation on whatever canvas suited me at the time. I came across a poem about a warrior's prayer to his horse. I don't remember all of it, but what I do recall was the hopes and dreams of redemption in the reality of the sun and its warm caress in the baptism of my brain. "My horse be swift in flight and bear me far from the arrows of my enemies and you shall be rewarded with ribbons and bows." That was the power of my gift in the hoofs of a horse that could burst through the clouds of decay and make a home anywhere I wished my mind to rest. But whether I was ready to root myself in the ribbons and bows of a world that I knew nothing about was the question that I was to come across. I took the poem and labored blindly on the path that was to carry me from the chaos of my past and place me in the exposure of an Old World. And I was not to know what to expect from the display of the sun. Such a force was now too bright to be brave enough to gaze into its eyes. But I let my heart be the horse and whatever was to come would have been the work of gods in my fresh start as I was to soar a bit too high. From the prayer I scrimshawed a horse flying out of a cloud and into the sun. On the other side of the knife I scrimshawed a road with a landscape that headed towards the brilliance of the orb. It may also have been interpreted as coming from the blinding globe of fire. The sun was a simplistic design of cosmic order that I knew so lucidly in the lust of my vision. I wasn't truly the reincarnated soul of an Indian ancestor, but from that blood was a rushing river in the sheer and

concentrated love of living beneath the circle of creation. The fact of having mighty bursts of brilliant patterns bequeathed to me through the eye of my mind's needle didn't necessarily make me a medicine man with decorative feathers and unbounded wisdom. On the contrary, it made me the greatest fool that I could have possibly become in the twilight of a twinkling star that held me to a cosmic rational. I knew absolutely nothing of this world. I had to painfully prepare to encounter each experience as though I was chasing dragons in the virgin snow. My worldly knowledge even as it is today is still somewhat oblivious to political existence and the only ores of actuality are within an internal reality. I have come to know the cement of society more painfully than most and my naivete is not as brilliant in the womb of my mind as it once was. But still I long for the creative communion that I once had in the purity of myself as I knew only to exist in relation to my own imagination. And in the foolish heart upon the miracles of my inner world the sheer concentration of creativity gave me a wonderful opportunity to work on a very fascinating mystery. And it was always one that beamed of love in its joyous place upon the heavens. There was a place within me so profound that contradicted everything I knew of life in all its great misery. Every time I rekindled the flame in coming closer to myself I had an ore that could be of great strength in organizing a creativity of comfort in the higher regions of the atmosphere. This was a time in my life when my imagination rendered a fantasy world of meaning and myth. It was that direct connection with a

supernatural reality that always made my life worth something to me. I had to imagine at the time that the beauty of my gifts as they flowed from my imagination were handed down from many generations. As being so I held a place in a long line of working with the mystery of miracles and solving the riddles of reality. And there was something with my life that I was meant to do. I just didn't understand what, but I was given a unique imagination to figure that out.

My family was very supportive of me as I tried to take my talents into the professional world for the first time. Everyone was impressed with the way that the knife came out. I received many complements, but I thought twice about the use of a prayer in the arena of my art. As a vessel of success perhaps I was playing with a power that I should have respected. I never knew how to wield the steel of my gift with the grace of God, as such a being would have

wanted me to. And I thought of superstition in the wrath of a creator as He worried about my ways in what I thought I was doing. Art is no simple task to take forth unto the frontiers of success where the sun is to shower the light of the work in its ways about the dollar. There are many ethical questions that an artist need grapple with if he or she is to maintain the integrity of their talent. This was a very serious gift and there were often times when I was to use it like a child. I hadn't truly the sight to see the medicine men in the village of my imagination, but I knew they were there. And they kept their intentions secret from even myself as creation cried from my fingers in ways that felt to be for no ones eyes but my own. My work was a personal and spiritual process and not to be used for the selfish gratification of success in which I sold my soul. And at times I didn't always know what I was saying with my work. I learned in school that my art could get me into quite a bit of trouble because of misinterpretation. But I suppose every artist must grapple with that reality. I took the chance this once that the great horse of a bursting flame was on my side. And I hoped for the work to signify a glorious entry unto a new home in the face of the sun. I made flyers of the poem with a picture of the knife on it. To display with the knife when I went to the show. The psychic had tormented me with a sudden eruption and I thought so often that I was to burst onto the world with the mastery of my art. My work was still raw and I never had a chance in the abrupt celebrity of just one piece. I had no idea what she was talking about and it haunted me my entire life. She was so

certain as if my life was to touch the lips of God in an eternal kiss. I couldn't help but place hope in my art, as I knew no other vessel. And I often fooled myself that I had a better chance than I actually did. I used my art in a way that would win me friends as if I was Van Gogh as he signed his work *Vincent* in the sincerity of his expressions. But to be able to amass a mountain of success was beyond my imagination and I was tortured with the riddle of a target that I knew not how to organize into the mandala of my mind's explosive triumph. In reality it was much better to believe that foolish miracles happened upon the sight of something simple, and that such elementary expressions were what led to greater rewards. I didn't realize a dream in the holy fool of my heart, but in doing this knife and proceeding to go to the show I gained added respect from the family. I had been down and out but brought myself back to a position that I was proud of. I was thankful to my uncle for the opportunity. But more importantly I owed much of it to that majestic blaze of brilliant light in the sky of my mind. To have been once blinded so joyously I thought never to forsake the memory of what was always my inspiration. I may have been the holy fool that dizzied in the dust of death and knew his heart to bounce between the depths and heights of a bungy jump. But I had been graced with a fire so immaculate and caring in the aorta of my inner world that it kept me warm in the arctic pole of damnation. And it never allowed me to give up in the humiliation of my place within humanity. It was to be

that fire that furthered me along the path against the odds of my disability and the miniature man of my masculinity.

I certainly received a high from the power of this piece in the prayer that I hoped would bring me a welcome from the wizards of an old wisdom. But it was not going to be one of comfort and ease to maintain. I went to the show with my uncle and one of his friends who was also a custom knife maker. Before we went in my uncle's friend turned to me and said, "There are a lot of politics that go on here. You know what I mean Jon?" I didn't like the sound of that and when I sat down and took a look around I realized that I fit in like a zebra. I was a tormented surrealist and the absurd had opened my chest and let my blood spill about the table as the old world men of knives and guns where grizzled in front of my foolishness. I sat there next to my uncle and displayed my knife along with the flyers. The whole time I just kept asking myself what the hell was I doing there. I wasn't one that armored the tank of my manhood with the wisdom of the trade. I was a new age artist on an Old World canvas. I received quite a few complements though. One man was impressed as he said in admiration of my soaring story, "It's nice to have a gift." Some of the compliments I received were from other scrimshaw artists. One woman even claimed that I was another professional in the same league with my sudden wielding of the old art. I truly could conquer any medium I put my mind to and I could do so with such finesse as though I had been practicing for years. Perhaps that doctor at the hospital was right when he claimed I could do anything I put my mind

to. The problem was my worth among men and my image of masculinity so deficient throughout my life. I felt ridiculous no matter how talented I may have been. I was displaying my soul on that table for everyone to see in a humiliating display of myself as I sat there like a fool that didn't know the first thing about the shows. I did receive one compliment that stuck with me though. It was from one of the top knife makers at the show. He read through the flyer that I made and then looked at the horse coming out of the clouds and into the sun. Then he turned the knife over and saw the road heading towards the sun as though he was suddenly the soul to be lifted to a greater level. He put it down and shook my hand and said, "Thank you. That was surreal!" I suppose that in retrospect my art was only meant for one thing. It was a sacred communion of sorts. I had a gift that could narrate in a way that transcended life. For a brief moment I could allow a window onto the avenue of mental merriment where I made a dream happen in the dreary of the day. It was in a way that could speak to people of deliverance unto a surrealization where they suddenly saw themselves as a connected part of the story. My art became a marriage of three components in the artist, art, and admirer. A level of awareness was synchronized in the communion of something sublime. This actually was a gift that operated on many levels and I would need to learn how to tame the horse to keep me from the madness of my medicine men. Simply because they were capable of controlling me quite often with the witchcraft of an alien design under the structure of what I knew to be sound. And I was still

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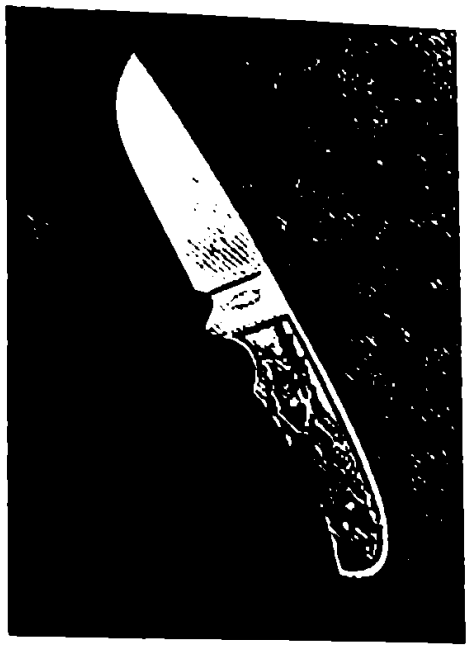
mildly retarded in many ways in which I was able to utilize my left brain as that part of me had not the power to see things through in thought.

Despite my awkwardness at the exhibit I continued to do about four or five more knives for my uncle, and attended the shows. But no one ever commissioned me to do a piece. I never built a portfolio big enough and wasn't able to situate my name as a serious competitor among the other artists. But even though I was disappointed with the lack of work one of the knives that I did was featured in the November 1995 issue of *Blade Magazine*. Unfortunately, my name was not given in the article. Instead, the person who made the knife was featured. But in the *16th Annual Edition of Knives 96* the knife that I had scrimshawed was displayed along with pictures of other knives that had been scrimshawed. The scrimshaw was of a Native American scene. It depicted an Indian on a horse. I took the design from a small sculpture that my uncle had, which he wanted reproduced. The sculpture was of *The End of the Trail* and it held a fair amount of symbolism in the journey of my discarnate destination unto the drained eyes of my disability. It was a painful piece to work on and the legend of the story filled me with the hopelessness of my disease. My art was a window unto a world that was a vacuum monster of supernatural sayings. I was sucked into my imagination and placed in unfavorable situations of symbolic insanity where my art came to life. But despite the madness of my mind as it lost itself in a loose relation with reality this piece was included among some of

the top scrimshaw artists in the country. My story had completed its pilgrimage unto the glory of the sun and I was left exhausted on top of the torment of my talents. Everyone knew the window into the struggle of my story. It was an honor and in reality was more than monumental for a new comer such as myself to gain a place among the gods. It had only been a couple of months since I entered the scene and already I was established as a professional artist. I had marked my flag on the moon as an artist of integrity. I was within the Old World wisdom of the knife and its generations upon generations of frontiersman and admirers of the natural world. I was truly the chameleon of many talents among my resting mind in any world I chose to be. But still I did not receive any requests for my art. I wasn't a personality within the scene that was able to mingle and socialize with everyone in a common interest of the Old World. Only in my art did I belong. In my character I was a holy fool and it was obvious to everyone. Being conscious of this made it even more difficult for me. The knife shows were a place for tradesman who knew the business of the art. They weren't for shy sensitive artists. And they certainly were not for surrealists that breathed the air of their art in the sorrow of their heart. And as such was so personal the art and artist could not be separated.



As had developed with my art and myself the lines between the symbolism and situations began to parallel themselves in my own mind. I lived in a subliminal world where the lines were often blurred. Dreams came to interfere with my waking life and I dreamed with my eyes open during the day as though I was in an arena of mystery and magic. Paranoid fantasies took precedence over factual information. There were many things about myself that I could never acknowledge. This book has changed all of that. It became a mirror that I can incorporate fully into perspective. The many parts of my life that I repressed at the time appeared in unnatural avenues of thought. My reasoning could have had me worried about delusional fears forever. The facts were actually of a world that had not the conniving

character of sinister schemes to see me set up in the insanity of damnation. But I had little experience with human beings and my worldly knowledge of this creature was so deficient that I thought to always expect the unexpected. Many times I was right to do so, as people prayed on my weaknesses in an antagonizing humility. But there were times when my thoughts were irrational as they tried to connect the unseen matters of a mystery that was working wild in my imagination. Fortunately I was always able to recognize the absurd as it handed me the missing pieces of a puzzle that didn't actually fit. One example of this was when I worked for my uncle as a roofer. He sometimes blew air out of his mouth and flapped his lips together making the sound of a horse. He was persistent about it. As with all of my art I worried about the interpretations of the knife that I scrimshawed for him. It began to appear to me that he believed that the horse represented him in some way. And I came to believe that he was taking me on a magic carpet ride. I took it as sign that he was becoming tired of carrying me as far as him having to offer me work. I felt like I was becoming a burden. The knife that he commissioned me to do of *The End of The Trail* seemed to me to be a message. There was no better way for him to tell me that our working relationship was over. He never said it in so many words but I was accustomed to reading so deeply between the lines that my imagination played nasty tricks on me. And the fact that he and my other uncle were always so insulting as I worked for them made these connections appear as though they were not that illogical. I suppose if

anything I was only gathering the pieces of what I already knew of the situation. And it was basically that it wasn't good to begin with as there was never truly a bond of trust between my uncle and myself. And this beautiful gift that was given to me had come to be a maddening curse that I was to bear throughout my life.

While working as a scrimshaw artist I came across an article in the *Lifebeat* section of the newspaper. It was about the teacher that had mistreated me. The school was trying to polish its image. It had previously been in the papers publicizing group projects that were being done by students. The title of the article about the instructor was "Artist Plays the Waiting Game." The column said that he had been placed on sabbatical. While on sabbatical he was doing artwork for a local children's hospital. He said something about attaining a vision by the work he was doing as though he was on some spiritual quest to do nothing but polish his image. The article talked about one of the paintings that he did. It was of a circus. If anyone knew about circus's it was this man. I recall that in the painting there was a man without a face. The instructor stated that he was meant to represent the people in our lives that wish to remain anonymous. There was also a chair and the president of the school was depicted in the painting as offering a seat in the school. At the very end of the article he asked, "How does that look?" As I read the article I knew that he was on sabbatical because of the letter that I wrote. He was probably forced to do some kind of charity work. At the time I was still fairly slow in the devastation of my disability, and much of me imagined it

to be the best apology I could possibly receive. I felt a great victory that I may have changed this man's life for the better and was charged with a new attitude. It was some time before I truly understood how shallow it really was in his attempt to glorify the nonsense of his self worth in the eyes of the public. And in actuality all he thought to really do was slap me across the face with the self-righteous vision that didn't face the facts of what should have been his own public humiliation. Everyone else I knew that read of it thought it was the biggest joke. But in the holy fool of my heart I thought to have brought this man to a revelation of salvation. I thought to rejoice in triumph of having brought a vision quest upon him, and it took me some time to realize the thin disguise that he wore in my naive interpretation of his character. The people who understood my side of the story who were not disabled in their ability to think things through past the veil of bullshit thought that this man was full of it. Clearly he was a man of image as his last remark in the article indicated. The truth didn't matter. It was all about how you looked in the end. As no one knew what had happened in that class and why he was on sabbatical he came out smelling like a rose for his contribution to the hospital. At the time I thought it was great of him to be doing such wonderful work, but when I came to my senses and read between the lines he smelled of something quite different. He hid behind his own face of anonymity in the circus of his school, as he never had to bear the truth in the light of day. He was an artist of mirage and he knew nothing about redemption as he thought to live in the illusion of his

persona. He was the type of man that was so wrapped up in his image of respectability that if I were to include his name in this book and by chance it reached his audience he wouldn't know how to look at himself again. So I grant him that face of anonymity.

Yet upon my feelings at the time I felt as though I had changed a man's life for the better and I thought to accept his apology. Simply because I was severely slow in so many ways to see it was truly a veil of clever nonsense in the brilliance of his image. A few days after this article came out I was visiting with my parents and my mother began telling me about a young woman that I had known from childhood that had manic depression. Our families often got together over the years and knew each other well. Despite this, I had not seen her since I was very small, around the age of ten or twelve. My mother went on to tell me that she had stopped taking her medication and was manic. Her family and her then boyfriend ended up having her hospitalized. It was the latest news. This network of family and friends suddenly opened up. Everyone was on the telephone spreading the word to watch out for this crazed young woman who was on the loose with the fire of her heart and the spark of divinity twirling madly in her mind. My mother then cautioned me never to go off of my medication. If I ever did she said that she would disown me. It was typical of my mother to hold the world over my head and threaten to drop it on me. She liked to believe that she had soul control of my life even when I lived with my grandparents. It was often my mother's unnecessary threats that made me regard her as a

dominatrix of divinity in the cloth of a nun. She had many faces as a woman and I thought her best as a friend as she could be the greatest person to be around. She had an infinite wisdom when we talked as equals as I wished to be thought of and treated like my brothers. But I wasn't one of my brothers. I had an illness, and occasionally the mother superior image was brought forth and I had to deal with it as though I was still a child. My brothers didn't know this side of my mother and I was the one to be beaten into submission as I had a tendency to be wild on occasion. But I longed for a relationship with her in which I was like my brothers and not to be stricken with the strictness of her tone as she held her ruler ready to strike upon the slightest movement in my life. Unfortunately I had a very difficult relationship with my mother that struck the heart of my masculinity and made me wonder if I would ever be a man. And because so I tended to act out on occasion in disrespect, and often times to my own regret. I could be a mouth of venom and never cared for the way I talked to anyone when I wasn't feeling well. And I always felt remorse in my dealings with my mother. It was to take some time before I finally stabilized my relationship with her in the maturity of my growth. But as was in the current situation I asked what happened that they had to have this young woman hospitalized. Other than just being off of her meds there had to be some kind of abnormal behavior that caused everyone to panic. My mother told me that her personality changed overnight. She began talking very quickly as most people in a manic state do, jumping from topic to topic. No one

knew what she was talking about. It was clear to me that she was of a consciousness accelerated in the fire of what this illness can do upon the blazing Zeppelins of our brains. She was a sister of sorts caught in the blood of this imbalance and I knew we were of the same spark that carried us through the storm of this disorder. She took everyone by surprise but me, as I knew the monolith to appear to us of a touched complexion in our acceleration of intellectualization. And especially as we became impassioned like children in the branch of such innocent thought that questioned the basic properties of funny phenomena even in the features of our own faces. Even in my sluggish thought of drifting days the gods could greet me with an epiphany, which I could run with if I desired unto the creative connections of an extraterrestrial experience. Not often, but often enough to give me ample food to last through the frozen tundra of the most hellish winter. I think her parents called the police and they took her away, which was a rather tragic event. To me it wasn't a big deal and I thought not to consider her so crazy in the corner of the situation. I had been to the hospital and experienced the severity in moods that cause people to look upon you with fear. I knew what it was like to be misunderstood - the whole nine yards. Everyone seemed to be against her and being in that situation many times myself among my own family members I felt sorry for her. This was someone that knew the fire of divinity in the dungeons of the damned. And her circumstance spoke to me of the madness I knew myself in the desolation of the earth as it swallows us into the cold and

unforgiving dirt of the dead. And such a place is where we are the only life among the corpses.

There was always an eerie fashion of unfolding phenomena within the structure of unforeseen forces that I never fully understood. A play of situation was always awaiting me in the quest of constellations that had been engraved in the night sky of my unconscious mind. To most people coincidence was an accident in the car crash of the cosmos. But to me it was secretly arranged in the synchronization of a universe that played the pawns of our psyches. Synchronicity was the spindle of the goddess in the organizing principle that connected everything in the missing pieces of reason. In life there were leaps of synthesized notes on the keyboard of my mind. To simply play the melody in the joy of spinning this fantastic wheel seemed the thing to do, but I never anticipated where it was going to take me next. And I was often to leap upon the legless lizard as he had wings of rapidity in the fantasy world of an ancient wisdom that bowed before the sun. My life was planned by a force greater than I could imagine as it connected the quest to the riddle of fate and the breath of the great Originator that spoke the words of my travels in predetermined mysteries.

It was the same day that I learned of this poor young woman's tragic liberation in the helium balloon of mania that I helped my mother with her grocery shopping. Running errands was a way for my mother and myself to build the relationship. We went to a Stop and Shop and everything was as usual. I joked with her and teased

her about how I was bored with the process of gathering nuts and berries for the Neanderthals. I normally did this when we went shopping. I pushed the cart and she picked out the food telling me that she was never going to take me shopping again. It was just another day and moments like this made my relationship with my mother the friendship that it is today. I was content with the duration of the days as they thought to be calming in the silence of my world as it synchronized a union of quiet belonging and uneventful headaches. I was reaching a place in life of stability for the first time in a while and I thought to savor the silence for as long as I could. Until out of nowhere I was blinded by the mystification of angels gathering their wings in the fondness of an electric sun. But this sun was not the liquid wonder of a pure process of thought that messaged my psyche on LSD. It was the gentle and soft complexion of a naturally beautiful face that graced the appearance of the young woman everyone was so talkative about. She seemed to appear from the throne of the heavens where the female deity stood fluid in the spinning craft of a celestial database. We both locked in a gaze that worked on the combinations of each other's schemas. It was a moment that was hard to forget even now as it has passed so distantly through the culmination of my experience and into the shadows of memory. We were instantly connected by the means of a force that opened a bridge of imagination between us. I had never experienced this before and we both were capable of inducing a hypnotic state in the other. I think that the last thing that either one of us thought

would happen was that we were going to run into each other that day. It took us both by surprise. Although I hadn't seen her in years I instantly recognized her and she recognized me. She was wearing a gray sweatshirt and jeans. Her complexion was fair and she had short wavy brown hair. Her voluptuous figure held my interest for a brief moment as I could tell that she wasn't wearing a bra. I tried not to stare, but couldn't help it. There was a sudden sexual tendency that tickled my mind and I thought to quickly escape it, as I wasn't one that lingered so long on the empty look of desire. But I wasn't able to escape her expression and her eyes as we both wove a wheel of spirals circling us within each other. Her windows were sky blue. You could see right through them unto the scattered clouds that were weightless in the reverie of the moment. Her facial expression was the same as mine. A look of bewilderment as both of us were mesmerized by the others psychic world. She had me hypnotized and I felt like our thoughts were reciprocating in a mathematical language that was universal to the dialect of our eyes as we organized our databases in the union of our retinas. I fell into the energy that surrounded her and lost myself in the calm and clear ambiance that filled her eyes. We seemed to have caught each other with our defenses down. We were naked children in the garden of thought. There were no walls between us and it was as if there was some kind of telepathy at work that I had never known before. I've never looked into the soul of another in my life and I was astounded at the depth that could be achieved between two people in a chance encounter of naked eyes

where words need not speak for the suggestions of our pupils. After a while I realized that we were both staring blindly at each other and I knew this trance need be broken else we were to stand there all day. Being shy and realizing I should be polite I turned away without saying anything. She was with her aunt who she had been living with since she left the hospital. Her aunt and my mother knew each other and started talking. I stood over to the side and waited patiently for the conversation to end. Then the young woman approached me as perhaps she thought herself to wonder in the world of my own eyes even more in the clumsy clay of language. The first thing out of her mouth was "It's been such a long time. You look good." She struck up a conversation that was a mile a minute. She talked so fast I don't remember much of it. She mentioned something about being on a quest to find a motorcycle. She told me about what had happened and that she spent time in the hospital. After hearing her say this I then said, "I know how difficult it can be." I never knew what to say, but I longed to comfort her immediately as though it was an instinctual design that I had been programmed for in the mystery of her eyes. But she went on and on about how she had a new philosophy on life and how things weren't difficult at all. She was caught in the beauty of madness and I knew right away that the divine devoured those of us in the gardens of our minds as we walked with God in the many fruits of the imbalance. And her attitude that was so glorious with the spark of life greatly conflicted with what I heard was going on around her. I didn't say anything though. It was not my place. I wasn't about

to burst her bubble and I knew that things were meant to be realized by one's own accord. My philosophy was with John Lennon and whatever got a person through the night and through their life was all right by me.

Not only did she have manic depression but she also worked as a counselor where she was hospitalized. I could only imagine how humiliating it must have been for her to have her coworkers see her like that. She knew about my history with mental illness and gave me her number and said, "If you ever want to talk about things you can call me. I know how they don't understand." After this was said my mother and I went on with our shopping. The first thing that my mother said to me was, "She's in denial." It didn't take much to figure that out. She had it bad and she was suggesting that *I* needed someone to talk to? Not that I didn't, but I thought that she was avoiding her own problems. You can't really be in a whirlwind of misunderstanding with everyone around you and offer help to someone else. But she was right. They didn't understand. It was very difficult for me growing up in my family. I was always in the perimeter of my own perplexing thoughts and beliefs. Yet my family seemed so ignorant to the world that was within the freedom of our own minds and too much of the outside world for that matter. I had a hunch that the two of us were going to find an understanding that eluded their all too mundane minds. And the thought of meeting a feminine mind on the fringe of society excited my imagination and further perpetuated the mythology of my inner world. I had never

walked with a woman be it sexual or spiritual and she was a good three years older than I was. She had experience in life that I never knew in the holy fool of my heart and I thought for a moment to embark upon the wings of an angel and all the wisdom of her world. She was a soothsayer in supervision of the troubled and to that she dedicated herself before the fall of her flight unto the craters of Venus and the love of her mania.

For three days I contemplated calling her. I wasn't sure what to think of her and had amounted a great deal of suspicion concerning these creatures that walk with their spine facing heaven and hell. Yet on the other hand I was one of them also no matter how alien I felt in relation to the earth. My own spine was capable of delving into both ends of the spectrum as I myself was born into the foothold of flesh and the misery of my own imperfections. But I had almost been expecting her in a new series of surreal adventures that were to take place in the landscape of a predetermined future. The many sages of myth and legend spoke of such a woman that was to teach me the powers of my own potential. I was one that lived in a wonderful puzzle and I longed my life through for the seeds to be roses if not only once so that I might smell the garden of a real friendship. I knew the situation well from what my mother had told me. I had found out all I could. I knew that she was separated from her boyfriend who she had been living with, and I knew she was on shaky grounds with her family. I also knew how lonely it was to be in a situation like that without anyone to talk to. I weighed everything before deciding what

to do. When I came to a resolution my conscience told me that it was a mistake to get involved. This was trouble with a tragedy written disastrously across the sky. Yet I had not eyes for the sky and of my own spiral into the workings of a woman's heart I was mesmerized by fate. The cavernous core was a treasure of whispering words and I longed my entire life to taste the winds in the wisdom of a woman. I suppose I should have let the situation resolve on its own without any intervention. But I was lonely at the time and up for an adventure. Some things just seemed in the moment as they were written in the stars and in the archetypes of dreams. That's the way I looked at it and I imagined I knew enough of my own illness to comfort her madness and ease her transition unto the rocks of reality where I could help her gently into her own realizations. She needed a guide and I had spent enough time with the spirits of my own isolation to believe that I was an individual to aid in friendship a young woman that was in a fair amount of distress. Yet I was of a *Peter Pan* wisdom and knew not myself how to control the dragons of our destiny. I thought in the powers that be to offer an island as was all I knew to do in helping someone find their own way. And I imagined I was to forge the greatest friendship that I could ever dream of. The romanticism of the plot transported me unto a time in history where people lived not with the dying days of the world, but rather with the fire of their hearts in the mysteries of myth and legend. I was preparing myself for whatever lay ahead with a previous notion that I was meant to take the path. I had no one to talk to either and I was

more than interested in her philosophy and so anxious to share my vision with someone as it suffocated in silence for what seemed to be much too long. I thought she might fill in the missing pieces as a woman of wisdom in the way of my walk across the thin ice of existence. I was so anxious to make a friend as I had been rejected throughout my life. This was someone that held her hand out to me and it was a once in a lifetime chance for a fool of my proportions upon the window that I saw that was to walk with the heart of a woman. I could know no other joy apart from my own inner world than the passion of a woman that was burning with the love of philosophy. This was a dream come true to stroll about the wisdom of the mind with a feminine fire in the study of truth. My mother had told me that she was highly intelligent - a border line genius. When I was very young my mother took me to a school for gifted children. I applied and took an entry test. They told my mother that my right brain was exceptionally well developed but that I was only average when it came to other tasks. I always had a deficient left-brain and it was the mark of my foolishness throughout life. I wasn't accepted into this school, but this young woman was. I don't think she actually went though. But that's beside the point. Anyway, I wasn't sure what to expect and my imagination usually mislead me and often let me down. So I tried to keep a perspective on reality as was hard for me at times, but I knew enough of the situation to have the pieces of realism before me to suspect the chance of tragedy. I was willing to take chances for a walk among the clouds in the mind of a

philosopher. A woman could be no more beautiful than in her wisdom of the world as she sat upon the hill with eyes of wonder. And in reality I did imagine that this was to be a friendship forged deeply in the ripples of both our minds. It seemed so certain as when we first laid eyes on each other we could have touched the secret sectors of our psyches in a synchronicity of our souls. Friendship was something that I waited for in the dungeons of death and I thought it in its greatest form a union of two souls. And to my surprise a bridge had been built between our eyes to suggest the possibilities of honesty and innocence. But the clumsy clay of situation wasn't necessarily linked with whatever was communicated in the mesmerizing miracle of that moment.

When I phoned her she said; "I was afraid you would never call." I just couldn't pass up an opportunity to get myself into trouble and I was blind to the hazards that could be involved with a woman. I had no experience with the other gender and though I was of legal age to drink I may as well have been locked in a closet for the greater part of my life. My illness kept me from venturing into experience for much of my stay on earth and even now I feel a fool for having lived in introversion. I never tasted experience often enough. But when it did touch my tongue it promised to be intense. We set a time and place to meet and a few days later I met with her at her aunt's house. She needed to run some errands and I was her chauffeur for the day. The first thing we did was clean out her car, which was being junked. So right away I knew I'd be driving her around all the time if she desired

to take a liking to my company. That suited me just fine. I was more than happy to be around someone - especially a woman with divinity madly embedded in the muscles of her mind. The next thing we did was stop at the pound. She wanted another dog. I never understood why. She couldn't take care of the one she already had. But I went along with it and it turned out that she decided against it. After we left the pound I tried something that I had once seen in a movie. I left the car locked, and then unlocked the passenger side and gave her time to get in before I unlocked the drivers side. She was supposed to unlock the door for me. She didn't. Not only that but she put her seat all the way back and propped her feet up on my dashboard. She thought she was really something special. I knew right away that I was to bow before her if I wanted the grace of her majestic madness to offer me company in the lonely world that I knew of for too long. Maybe she saw the same movie and wasn't going to play that game. But I definitely took it as a sign that she was self-centered and was disappointed that she didn't think enough of me to unlock the door. She failed a very simple yet important test. Maybe she thought she was too good to be tested. I don't know. I was happy just to have someone to talk to so I overlooked it and I myself wasn't in a position to be picky about the people I wanted in my life. The fact of anyone offering their company to aid in my path of maturity was miracle enough to celebrate the great garden of the gods. And be it a woman I thought myself blessed by the heavens to discover what hearts wield their fiery growth for. Because we were familiar with one another

from childhood and our families knew each other it made things more comfortable for the both of us.

I don't remember much of the philosophy that she was so insane about. It had a major impact on her life though and she tried to apply it to mine. I eventually incorporated much of it into my life because of the need to come closer to a path that I could walk in working with the wisdom of myself. The philosophy had to do with art and what I remember of it was rather beautiful. There was something about all of us being artists in our own ways. Each of us has our own creative talents that can be applied to daily relationships and to daily life. The trick of creativity is in the courage to be expressive, but even the layman and laywoman dream. And there isn't a soul on this earth that hasn't the potential to utilize the gifts that rest in the rivers of their heart. Each of us has a world within ourselves that breathes poetry in our mind's pupil. The philosophy was not accurate about how we share this thread of creativity, but I can surmise it exists within each of our inner worlds. And we all have an inner world that speaks to us and asks that we ourselves speak of it more often than we do. Life is such a merry go round of men and women in business attire and draining days of the working world. Such an overwhelming reality suffocates our imaginations in the misery of producing manufactured meaninglessness. We strive to become adults and make our way into this world of nonsense, but then reflect on who we really are, as the treasures we once knew are now dead in the disease of the system. If only we could all utilize and tap into the creativity that is embedded in

each of us, be it in the simplest touch upon the ordinary duration of the dullest day. Life could become a harbor for humanity to speak its heart in color and not to give way to the death that the world is so famous for in its dreary speech of black and white. Even those within a world of gray have ores that wait to be mined and longed to be brought forth unto communication. The Scrooges of the world are all artists waiting to be reborn. If only we could live in the creative gifts of Christmas forever and flow from us the wisdom that resides in the talents we fear to use. The world might blend with the harmony of ourselves as we are art. Each of us has a heart no matter how dead we perceive it to be and if only we could forge our lives closer to the truth of ourselves. All are capable of the creativity that comes from this fountain within us. Art and creativeness can be applied to even the simplest things in life making the world a better place to live in. We all can speak of that which we feel in the living color of our canvases in every form of communication. The philosophy also spoke of individuality in the unique designs of our own dwelling where we all have within us the sacred consummation of ourselves. The human being is equipped with the necessary foundation of timeless treasures and ornamental ores to feast in independence forever on his or her own being. Dependence need not take the place of the inner strengths that we all can draw upon to live our lives in harmony with ourselves. The philosophy was one of an inner voice that we all should follow and allow to be spontaneous in the joy of creation as we give our treasures to others if only to make life the

miracle that it is as we are of the power of our own imagination. We are each a work of art and so should be our expressions as we forge them closer to the poetry of our own hearts. It's a way of life that doesn't really make sense to the greater part of the population. But I often like to imagine it someday might. When she read it to me I thought so seriously that she need publish the work because of its pure potency. But it wasn't hers. She adopted it from an artist that had a wonderful say in the revolution of her mania. I could see how the spark of divinity captured her heart upon the feathers of the words. They moved in me also a flight unto a higher plane of understanding that creatively conjured the gifts of my own heart. And I loved the way she tried to spice everything up with her newfound view of life. It was as though she was experimenting with the elegance of life and she was a substance of color and vibrancy that decorated reality with the glory of the gods. She was very creative and our conversations were always stimulating. I had not many people in my past with a lust for life and I too longed to praise the miracle of being if not only for a short while before I banged my head against the bricks of bewilderment. I began to discover that I had found someone with a creative mind. She was the poet I had always wished to wander with. She was someone who was able to make leaps of imagination and jump in the puddles of purity as such was the palace of thought. She was an individual that carried with her an ocean of depth that I had been longing to discover in a woman. But still, I was cautious and very careful about how I proceeded to get to know her. I had never

known a true friend in my life and was more than worried about the stability of her character as an inferno of passion that might burn me horribly if I got to close.

The second time we met I brought her a relaxation tape. I used to listen to it all the time to calm my own thoughts. It's a remarkable piece of music that sways with the calling of angels and shelters beneath the waters of God. Its part of a series and the particular tape I always liked most is called *Sound Healing*. You can purchase one of the series at any bookstore that carries audiotapes. The music makes use of a binaural beat that is used to synchronize both halves of the brain while restoring clarity of thought and calming the listener for meditation. It really works wonders and I suggest it to anyone that wishes to uncover the harmony that music is capable of inducing in the rhythm of the brain. I could tell by the rapidity and flightiness of her thought process along with her refusal to take Lithium that the tape might be beneficial to her. I had a feeling she was going to be open to positive suggestions from me. She knew I had been there and I imagined I had just a bit of wisdom enough to relax her thoughts and keep her out of trouble. The way she presented herself she was prepared to get involved in anything that was risky and I immediately wanted to be protective of her if not only by being there. Her situation was very confusing to me, but I believed I had enough sense to know what I was doing even if I didn't. I thought the tape was a nice gesture. So did she. As we sat down at the kitchen table in her aunt's house she gave me something to drink. It was in a red glass.

She went on to talk about the symbolic significance of the glass and how it represented her passion. Her passion happened to be beaming into every corner of the world wherever we were to rest our souls. To her the color red was living everywhere and it set fire to the earth in a divine dance of dreams and genius. She continually talked about seeing it and the love that accompanied it as she was being touched by the ignition of madness in the beauty of its many petals around the core of her heart. I wanted to debate that red also represented anger, but it wasn't my place to argue and I always knew I was to bow before her in the shelter of her company. In the middle of her eloquent presentation her aunt's dog came up to me so I began to pet him. One thing led to another and the next thing I knew he was trying to make love to my leg. She rushed out of her chair and dragged him away from me. There she was trying to be profound and then her aunt's dog came along and said it all. It definitely broke the ice. We talked for a little while and then out of nowhere she asked me what it was that brought me to her. I wanted to say it was because she gave me her number and I was lonely for a friend. I always hated it when people made these blunt inquiries into the intentions of my being when I was invited. In the aching of my soul I longed to know what was behind those eyes as I thought them so sincere upon our first encounter. But to be eloquent in speech as I spoke of the spirals that were pulling me towards her was something I wasn't of in the humble handicap of my tongue. Besides, she didn't give me a chance to speak. She just looked at me and said, "God sent you to me for a

relationship." She seemed excited to have someone who she could mold. Because she talked so much about God I went ahead and told her about my vision. She was thrilled about it and an instant bond developed between us in the supernatural voltage of vehemence that was now to be taken from the sky and feasted on for our entire friendship. The only thing was that she never gave me a chance to finish anything. She was always one step ahead of me. She claimed to have psychic powers. She knew the future, but she said that if she were to tell me about it then it wouldn't happen. She professed her belief in fate. Sometimes I couldn't help but laugh even though I had a few beliefs that were out of the ordinary myself. Fate was fathomed in my mind as I met her, but I never wanted anything but my own free will and I tried not to dwell on destiny because it was such a levee that waited to be broken as the psychic professed. I gave her a complete description of the vision and its circular design as we came closer to seeing it together in the union of our communication. She insisted that it was a sphere, but I saw it in a two-dimensional plane. In the same way that you would see a dream. I wasn't able to picture it in three dimensions at first. She knew that I was an artist and after telling her about the vision she asked, "Now what can we do to make this?" I don't know how but she intended to help me with it. I hadn't really considered how I would create the spinning wheel. It seemed like such a major project. I told her that a computer would make the perfect medium. But I wasn't skilled enough with the computer. I was thinking of a long-term goal, for when I became more proficient

and had access to more powerful programs. She went on to compare me with Jimmy Hendrix, saying that she believed he and I saw similar things. I was very flattered as a young man that had not a self-image of those proportions, and a bit surprised that she had such eyes for me. Hendrix was a revolutionary god of the guitar and she put me in his league with the power of my vision. My vision as it was to myself was greater than anything I could have ever known. And she saw it as I saw it in my own eyes. But I could never have rushed the rivers of legendary birds unto the sky of a soaring soul in the way that a man like Hendrix could. I was just a holy fool that could barely embark upon the hours of the day. My artistic fancies were of feathers that occasionally formed their wings and flew from my fingers. But there were few times when they roared like the lions of untamed majesty and I never imagined I could be the person she saw in me.

I never admitted that I came to her for a relationship. There was a conflict in that, which I didn't know how to arrange in what was suddenly confusing the situation even more. She was eager to involve herself in a relation in the freedom that she now found in her mania. But she had a furious race to the finish line of everything and needed to be slowed to a pace of sanity. I thought I could handle this, and imagined I was the one with the task of moderating her madness to a stride that could be sown in the fabrics of an easy to manage future. I thought nothing but to be friends, but she had expectations of me from the beginning and I was too inexperienced to offer anything but my innocence as I was in relationships. First off I wasn't even conscious

of the reasoning that I might have been pursuing a relation, which I really wasn't. And if I was I was never so bold to bluntly make a suggestion that we know each other intimately during our first discussions. And in reality I wasn't truly that attracted to her in a psychical sense when we first came to know one another. She was an attractive young woman, but not so breathtaking that I thought to lust for her figure. I had eyes for emotion and depth, but aesthetics of sexuality were not actually on my menu when I walked into her diner. A relationship was far from my mind at first and all I really wanted was someone with whom I could walk and talk about the wisdom that flowers in life. As I got to know her I became very attracted to her physically as an emotional bond was to develop. But it wasn't until we began a creative intercourse with our minds that I thought her arousing. And in the beginning I understood her situation. If I jumped right away and fell for her as fast as she wanted things to proceed I would have been fooling myself to think that the relationship was going to go anywhere. I would have been fooling myself during any part of the friendship to believe so. And the difficult part was going to be avoiding that type of situation in which I became that fool. She could be a vacuum of passion that was to place upon my face the eyes of a wanderer in the blinding light of her heart. I was unknowledgeable about friendships with woman and had no idea what to expect in the course of our relationship. Plus being as shy as I was it was hard for me to be open with another person and often painful. That would have made a relationship difficult. I was

the type of person that needed time to get to know someone before I shared intimacy. I wasn't affectionate and tender displays made me uncomfortable. She came from a family where touch was natural. Yet I was frigid in the frozen tundra's of my androidian armor and never overstepped my bounds to grace my hands upon another as it felt like a river that flowed upstream. I needed time to ease into a situation with someone where I felt comfortable with touch. If there were to be a relationship it would have had to develop a little more slowly than she had in mind. But her mind was on fire with the passions of her heart and she was alive for the first time in ages. Yet I was the turtle ready to withdraw within my shell when things got too intimate. This slowly drove her over the edge, as she wanted someone to share in her mania and was looking for a relationship despite the chaos of her life. I was in a predicament that was dumfounding, as I had never walked with a woman even in a platonic path. And she was of a wisdom that sat me before her in the youth that knew nothing but to play along. I only knew to allow her the creative philosophy of love that she so desired in the aching of her heart to be a poet upon the river of her genius. And I was one to know the same in the ardor of my inner world. My purpose of presenting her with the garden of creation in the purity of my heart became clear to me as though she wished me from a world where I lived alone in imagination.

She had a book that she carried around with her wherever we went. It was all about Krishna and had some wonderful illustrations

in it. The first time she let me look at it I came across a picture of this deity. I had never seen him before and he was a very odd character. A figure that was blue I thought to be more of an extraterrestrial in the adulthood of a *Smurf*. He looks more like a Star Trek character than a God. His presence was overwhelmingly surreal as I thought him more a member of many dreams that had danced their way across the sky and into the recollections of a former life. He was in a garden playing a flute and behind him was an image of the number four. It was blended in with the garden and very subliminal. I pointed it out to her and asked what it represented. She looked at me and said, "You have to figure that out for yourself." She liked to keep an aura of mystery about her. I could never tell what she was thinking and she tried to present me with riddles. But the truth is that I don't think she knew either. There was another picture in the book that she made a point of showing me. It seemed to relate to our friendship in the eerie fashion of a weaving tapestry that traveled along the river of our time together. Suddenly the circle was opened in entry onto the forewarned future of a fate that had me damned, as I often was to be wherever I went. There were four frames to the illustration. In the first frame there was a woman walking through a garden carrying a basket. A man was admiring her from the corner of his eye. The second frame depicted the man and woman holding each other in a warm, passionate embrace. Next, another man confronted the woman as the man she was embracing watched from a distance. In the final frame the man that was watching the two was falling into a pit. After

showing me this picture she said, "That's why I want to be a virgin until I get married." I didn't say anything, but something terribly odd had just transpired. To myself I thought, "OK, whatever." I knew she had previous relationships and I couldn't imagine what her logic was. She had lived with and been with her most recent boyfriend for three years. You don't live with someone for three years and remain a virgin unless you live in the nunnery. And then later she confided in me that she went off of her medication because she feared that she was pregnant. She puzzled me with that one and I couldn't understand what she meant. I tried to assume that at the time she felt as if she had never been in a relationship before as though she was reborn in the beauty of her madness. I don't know why it mattered to her anyway. I didn't care how many men she had been with. It was none of my business and didn't see how it mattered to our friendship. But I could gather quite well that she was unfolding something of our friendship in the enigma of Krishna's magical book of spells. There was no doubt in my mind that she was opening an unfortunate set of circumstances before me. I knew nothing of woman or of the way they operated in the language of their hearts. For all purposes I lived on the moon my entire life without ever coming close enough to understand the rational that I was about to encounter. And such rational was to remain a puzzle for the rest of my life in unlocking the enchantment of women, which more often than not I had better luck in leaving the figuring alone. In the illustration there was also a blue river that flowed through each scene as it connected the moments in

time. As it progressed to the last scene the color become a deeper blue. She said to me, "But that's not the end. It just gets deeper." That was not much comfort to me and I didn't want to be a pawn in her game of selfish insanity. This picture established my fear of her own programming in the river of a self centered agenda and the thought of misfortune never left my mind throughout the rest of the friendship. I offered her my innocence as a friend and she had a program running in the prophetic dream of our encounter. It was the working of the great Krishna as such a God held his holy river in the juncture of our journeys to be intertwined momentarily so that we may pass through the situation of her episode. As the picture foretold it was no ones calamity but my own. And being of a right brain dominance images spoke to me of sheer power and authority over my present path. I knew the strength of symbols and I knew that art could be dangerous in allowing it to unfold as prophecy. I was one that lived in a painting and my life was an imitation of the art that I encountered and created. I thought to forget the river of time and for once I wished to live in the moment as if I was alive again. And perhaps I was in the company of another whose spark judged only those instants that were twirling madly in the animation of a tree whose roots had been freed from the prison of the earth. I hadn't a friend in life and hungered hopelessly like a young romantic to be a reality unto myself that decorated the earth with the delight of the minutes as I stopped them in their empty progression. And somehow there was magic flowing through us from every corner of the world

and for the first time in ages I thought to let the good times roll and the river take me to the ocean of the unknown if that was what it desired. We were both quite unique in our individuality and we trusted each other with our feelings. The images were disturbing to me, but I was alive and in the presence of a mind that was teaching me for better or for worse. I thought to learn as much as I possibly could from her as she knew what it was to be there and back. And despite the confusion of the situation I did decide to trust her a great deal. The charm of the moment was all that mattered between us and I longed to keep the candle of light that lit our eyes in wonder for as long as I could. We were in the park at the time and after we finished discussing the book it began to pour like rivers of rushing beads unto the ground of our unfolding fate. We both rushed to the car and as soon as we got in she said, "Thank God they don't have witch hunts anymore." It was as if she had just cast a spell upon me and in the innocent knowledge I had of women I knew not exactly what was going through her mind. In every respect I felt as if she did just suddenly launch a formula for the two of us to consume in the unconscious course of our relation. And I knew only to avoid the situation and keep the magic in the bubble of the garden. We had an innocence about us in the first meeting of our eyes and it made for a beautiful friendship that I felt I could maintain.

The second time we met we decided to go back to the park. We brought a blanket and a radio and sat under the shade of a tree. I never imagined I was going to recapture the beauty that resided in the

lost garden of my childhood with another soul that sat softly in a delicate play of virtuous thought. There was something meaningful about the park that we went to and it flowered with wonders of innocence and light that I had never shared with another since my joyful games of boyhood with my brothers. She talked about the spiritual significance of the grounds as we were both being synthesized by the ghosts that haunted us merrily in the amazement of our machines. These engines of thought that brought the rest of the world a systematized meaninglessness of dogmatic days suddenly sparked with beautiful ballerinas of divinity. I remembered the park from when I was young. My father took my brothers and I there to play baseball quite often and I had not visited it in ages. I left the magic to yeast many years ago and it rose splendidly in the rebirth of my memories as I found myself back in the joy of an age that never left the wonder of weightless reverie. My brothers and I often played *G.I. Joe*. That was big for us growing up. I remember there was a large tree. I don't know what kind of tree it was but the branches hung down all around the tree touching the ground. If you made your way through the branches there was a space between them and the trunk of the tree. It was like a giant tent made by nature. I remembered that most of all, as it was a place to congregate within the garden and conjure the fantasies of pretend. We were once fearless heroes and knights of valiance before we walked into the reality of our paths upon the death of the imagination. When that part of our mind gives way to the misery of mankind each of us dies. Upon

that death the mind need be a thing that is worthless and ruined in the hell of the world's pointless parade. To give up imaginative thought as so many of us do is to live by numbers and barcodes on our foreheads. It need not be a time capsule that never leaves childhood and has us floating in the clouds of never growing up, but rather it should be an integration of decorative thought that walks with us as adults and colors the clouds that often rain upon our misfortunes. At least in creativity we can still think ourselves valuable even if no one else does. Creative thought is a deliverance unto salvation and the only thing of worth within my life as it shines in the darkness of a world that has been overcome with misery. It's the only thing that I have and I hold on to it for the worth of its weight as it enriches the starving condition of my soul in its walk within these words. If it were not for my imagination so strong in the immaculate ores of my mind I would have given in to death's wretched concentration camp in the holocaust of my many depressions. There were times in my life when it blossomed with such beauty that I thought never to forsake the garden even against the odds of circumstance. It seemed that we were both familiar with the park from childhood, yet this was the first time that I had visited it since I was very small. It brought back a special feeling in me that remembered a time of worth when I was innocent in the world. And she was right. There was something very spiritual about it. The atmosphere that was projected by both of our inner worlds came to unite in a special place in time that just the two of us shared. I never imagined I would be so content with another if

not only for a while that I may breathe the miracles before they wished away with the rain.

As we sat on the blanket we listened to some tapes she had brought. We were listening to *The Crash Test Dummies* and she often made commentary on the artists as she delved into the lifestyles that she imagined they had. She was extremely perceptive. More so than I imagined a person actually could be as she could figure so intelligently from the music and present me with psychological profiles. She was highly intelligent to a point that astounded me, yet as much as a woman as she was there was still a young girl within her that longed to be among the garden as much as me. She had a dollar bill that she carried with her wherever she went and it made me think of something that I might have known of had I been in love at a much younger age. This was no ordinary dollar bill and it had special powers that brought back memories of being in grade school. Actually, all it did was translate words into numbers. She claimed that God sometimes spoke to her in numbers. She also believed that everything could be reduced to numbers. I suppose she was right in that. Everything in the world is of a degree, or proportion, or measurement, and so on and so forth. Take a simple object like a cube for example. Let's say it's a die. It has six sides. Each side is of a certain length. It has a temperature. It has a density. It has numbers on each side. All of these things can be measured. I'm sure there are many other aspects of the die that can also be measured. But the point is that every aspect of the object can be broken down into

numbers. You can even take something as flighty as an emotion and scale it on a degree. It's not a philosophy that I admire, as I don't care for my essence to be diminished to a mathematical language. Even if it is universal I don't want to be paralleled with the 1's and 0's of a computer simulation. Reality has many similar qualities that can be mirrored by a machine such as a computer in its basic structure of digits. Even when I play around on my synthesizer I do a dance of a numerical language, but within that dance there was established a ghost in the machine. I'd rather hold the truth of that spirit as a spark of imperishability unto itself apart from the instrument that is organized in numbers. Anyway, she was fascinated with these things that we count on our fingers. She used the phony dollar bill to find out what number represented my name. I thought it was a little silly and hadn't witnessed something like this since I was in the seventh grade. She came up with the number nine. She seemed disappointed with that number as she asked, "Why the hell did your parents spell your name without an H?" I told her that my mother did not want me to be a junior as my father's name was John. Then I said, "You know, nine is simply three squared." So from then on to her I was three squared. I have no idea what the hell that meant. As far as the number nine was concerned I only knew of the book of Revelations. Also nine was the last number. But in that there was a lot of meaning associated with it. Then I knew of the number three being the Trinity of Christ. It seemed that numbers always have some kind of religious significance. I also read that three represents striving towards

something. But the number four was still a mystery to me. I later discovered that four represents wholeness or completeness. Carl Jung did a lot of work on the symbolism of three and four. In his opinion a truly modern man's work was to evolve from the state of consciousness represented by three to that of four. The evolution from the state of three to four was from the consciousness of that which is striving towards to that of which is complete in a tranquilly. He saw the incorporation of the Virgin Mary into the trinity of Christ to bring a more complete stage of development to the western world. I still have no idea how these meanings become associated with a certain number. I also read the same thing about the number five. But to me four has always been a feminine number and I have to imagine that the integration of a female divinity within the landscape of masculine psychology is the pathway towards that greater consciousness. Every religion or faith seems to bring its own significance to a set of numbers. Even in the Blackfoot teachings there was significant symbolism incorporated with numbers during ceremonial procedures. What I didn't know was that I was to undergo a procedure myself that sought to boggle my mind in bewilderment, as a woman was never a part of my life before.

She never did mention to me what her number was. I assumed it was four and my heart thought her among the blended beauty of the garden in Krishna's melody as he played the harmony of our friendship. Now that I had a number on my forehead and could be identified in her game of God's purest words we moved on to other

topics. We talked more of the things that others seemed to take for granted in the hectic schedules of their dying days. I had a funny feeling that we were children discussing the dreams we had hoped to arrive when we were to grow up. There was a very delightful intercourse of creative thought between us that I had never known with another soul. We listened to more of her music and I had brought a tape of my own. The first side was Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young. The album was *So Far*. The first song was *Déjà vu*. "If I had ever been here before on another time around the wheel I would probably know just how to deal with all of you." With those words flying through the air we both laid back. She had never heard them before. I couldn't believe I was the one to introduce the incantations of these radiant harmonies. There was something synchronous about it as we gathered beneath the vibrations of a vehicle that headed us towards the chance of hearts and the risk of flying away from the earth and its grounding gravity. She was very susceptible to any suggestion that I made and I came to realize this as though I had a responsibility to be upright and cautious. But I yearned for a creative interchange with someone my entire life and knew the fool of my own philosophy to be just as high in the glass onion of oxygen. Through the whole tape we both seemed to be entranced and it was partly due to the music I choose as I came closer to the questions that lingered in losing my heart to her. There was one song called *Guinnevere*. The beginning of the song was hypnotic and enchanting as it brought an Old World to the situation of our submergence in the merriment of

our minds. I felt the unison of what was a spiritual experience bring the air the dust of delight with every breath we took. We immersed as though we breathed the liquid of Atlantis and I had never known a purer moment in the company of another. I knew that nothing in this world lasted forever, and I wasn't sure how long that would be around. But as was I wanted to enjoy the moment and monument it in my mind as I never imagined sharing the same frequency with another again. The music was so soothing and then the first words of the song were, "Guinnevere had green eyes like yours, lady like yours." I turned to my side and she was there as if to show me what color her eyes were. They were blue, but that color was deceiving. I had been wondering what was behind those eyes since the first time I saw her. Now I knew the world of emotions that were swelling in her soul as a bridge between us was racing with horses and chariots of hunger. This time there was music set to it and the words spoke of the longing we had desired for our entire lives. To unite our psyches to another with the energy of child like wonder in the garden of our hearts pounding gravity. We both sought the sun somewhere in a fable. And our creativity transcended the haze and confusion of the rat race and the all too ordinary lives of our families.

When the first side of the tape ended I turned it over and we listened to *The John Lennon Collection.* At the end of the tape I included the song *Rain* by the Beatles, but I only added the last portion of the song. The song began at the end. She instantly started to sing along and the magic was about to touch her ears in a delicate

whisper of frolicking phenomena as I knew my mind to play with whatever medium I could in capturing the creativity of communication. She loved to sing and it seemed a girlhood dream of hers that she suddenly found vibrant in the vessel of her voice. At the time she was taking singing lessons and had a fair amount of charm ready to burst into song at any given moment. In moments of silence she would let the birds fly free from her throat and gather the clouds to rain their gentle spells upon the foliage of the earth. She had a voice that could still the ocean and calm a place in me that longed to rest my head on the pillows of mist that stretched nature's fruitful fields. Her voice was rough from cigarettes but it was still sweet and tender and it was a blessing to be around the vibrations of her vocals. How I loved to hear her speak my name. A woman had never spoke my hallmark of identity in a way that made me feel special to her. She put so much emotion into it and my name had previously been so muddied with the disease of the days as I lived with every cross I could carry in the labels of my life. She took it from the ground and cleaned it for me so that I could speak it myself in remembrance of my life, as I was as a child when I had purpose in the path of this planet. She was the first person in a long time to call me Jonny and I almost had forgotten who he was. There was an innocence about it, as though we picked up our paths from when we knew each other as children. Other than being called by a nickname I had always been called Jon and it always seemed so formal. But she projected a childhood friendship onto me. I would feel weak and my heart would

just melt everytime she said my name. She had a strange power over me and I was sinking even more than I thought was possible. But as she was singing she stopped and waited for the next verse. Then John Lennon began to sing, "Can you hear me?" It wasn't what she expected and a creative power of mental mirth suddenly struck her in a joyous realization. A smile immediately came to her face and her eyes lit up like magic. Out of nowhere she heard me through the music. I had forgotten that I added that little section to the end. I remembered that I had made the tape for someone a long time ago and loved to play with as many forms of communication as I could. I just did not know it was meant for her. Those words of Lennon were as much a surprise to me. We both had our share of miracles that we longed to perform for each other in the creative collage of our friendship. Something so subtle was a giant ripple of electricity pulsating through the air and arriving at the marriage of our minds on a level that was operating in the higher functions of communication. The suggestion that I was revealing to her in song what I had been dreaming of for so many years all came together perfectly. We seemed to have touched the others mind and played upon the dreams of the misunderstood as we found each other to be the only life in this world. And it was all in synch with her philosophy. I knew all too well the creative outlets of everyday life. Her convictions were already an in born program that I had been mastering in the privacy of my own secret world. She found in me someone who was able to

skillfully play my heart in bursts of imagination that adhered to her own way of walking through the world.

I remember getting into a conversation with her about visual hallucinations. Whenever I put pressure on my eyes I would see a brilliant pattern of zigzag lines. "I wonder what that is?" I asked her. She said, "Those are the cones and rods. I told you that before." I didn't remember her telling me that. But she always seemed rather excited that I often brought up conversations about things that the commoner regards as silly. In a sudden burst of rediscovered youth and inner joy she came out and said, "Oh my God, I feel like I'm ten years old!" We began to laugh. That was pretty much the way it went for us. We were like small children playing in a marvelous garden of sensation that we had so long forgotten through the many years of our hollow hovering with our heads barely above the water of the days. For all purposes we reverted back to the children that we knew each other to be so many years ago. I've never known myself to be happier with another human being. For once in this life I began to feel as though I could be somebody and I thought so fervently that I was. I could have spent forever with her in that park and never imagined the bond between us could be broken. I became oblivious to the cement of circumstance and the gods blinded me with their merciless mirage in the desert that I had known for too long.

We shared a lot in common and could talk about anything and everything. She was an extreme extrovert, which compensated well for my deep introversion. Although she liked to maintain a certain

amount of mystery about the situation that we were finding ourselves in, most of our conversations were very open. The circumstances of life didn't seem obvious to either of us really. We had almost forgotten about everyone else but ourselves as we drifted rather quickly into the seduction of the moment. Because I felt I could tell her anything that emerged from my heart the spell came to mystify me. It was rare to find a person that I could share anything I wanted with. And because she was working as a counselor before we met I felt as though I could trust her. I knew without a doubt that her judgement of me was not going to be critical. But still, there were many things about myself that I had never accepted and I had a fair amount of blockage that never allowed me to be entirely open about my past even with myself. I wasn't one to make leaps of faith so soon in any type of relationship. Though she always seemed to know where I was coming from and given time I felt I could have opened my entire life up to her. There was a connection between us that I have never felt with another human being. The patterns of our illnesses and our experiences seemed to mirror each other. We both became seriously sick when we began college and first started to discover ourselves. She was working towards a career in film when the illness came to carry her into the soundtrack of *The Wall*. We were both finding our creative compasses when our darkest hours came to plague us in the misery of our minds. I felt such a strong connection to her that was going to be the source of great pain if her character came crashing down before me. I felt like we were the only

two people on the planet that had a clue about being alive in the miracle of life. We seemed to be in a different time zone than everyone else. For the first time in my life I had made a psychic connection with someone. One that transcended the unenlightened fragmentation of mental processes that corrupted the rest of the world on their meaningless paths. The synchronicity was uncanny and too good to be true.

The days went on between us and we grew the garden of our friendship into a creative array of floating reverie that ignored situation and circumstance.

One day for some reason she decided that we should go to her parent's house. When we got there her boyfriend's car was parked out front. I also knew him well from childhood. I looked up to him at times, as he was a few years older than I was. I still wonder if she knew that he would be there. I didn't know if she wanted me to confront him so that he would stop calling her. Or maybe she wanted to create some kind of tension and jealousy. I remember asking her before we went into the house if he was going to assault me for being with her. She assured me that he was, "Cool." So the first thing I did when I went in the house was shake his hand and ask him how he and his family were doing. I hadn't seen any of them in such a long time. He went on to ask. "Do you know what is going on." I thought about it for a second thinking that he might be asking something deeper about the situation between her and I. But then nodded my head and said, "Yeah." Then he asked, "Is she driving you crazy yet?" She

really did a number on him when she became ill. I had a hard time grasping the situation. I got caught up in something that I knew I shouldn't have and it was now becoming seriously apparent. I gave her the benefit of the doubt. And I believed that she was an adult that could make her own decisions. She was older than I was and I had a fair amount of respect for that. I just looked down and said no. It was a lie. She had me puzzled with her situation and the choices she was making. Especially now that she brought me face to face with the reality of her life. She was clearly determined to maintain separated from her boyfriend. Yet I knew he was not out of the picture. After all she lived with him for three years. I wanted to believe that the magic of the moment was going to last between us. But the reality of the situation was going to last even longer. Somehow I knew things were going to resolve despite any fool hearted beliefs I desperately tried to maintain. There was something about her episode that I couldn't put my finger on. I knew she wanted to be with me. But there was a duality in her thought process. And who she really was confused me. Whatever the case it didn't matter because I was enjoying the time that I spent with her very much. Just before we left her boyfriend said to me, "Well, I'm glad that she picked you and not somebody that none of us know." As we were leaving he was almost ready to break down in tears and my presence was a reality that now had some serious doubts about getting mixed up in her life. I was in too deep and couldn't pull myself apart from her to be objective about the sad situation of her mania as she was injuring everyone around

her. And suddenly the pressure was on me. I had to make sure that she came down from her manic episode with as little emotional turbulence as possible and for a fool of my proportions I had quite a responsibility. I had to keep playing her game despite the outcome to myself. I was coming to care deeply for her, but in retrospect my feelings were in vain. I had never been special to anyone and I suppose that was all that I truly cared about. I knew all too well that she was sick. The reality of the situation was in my face for the first time. Of course I was good at fooling reality. And I could only foresee the future in so far as she didn't give way to a drastic change in personality. But somehow I knew that she was going to carry through with this manic episode until it collapsed on everyone around her including myself. And unfortunately she had already descended to the intimate union of a creative dialogue that I couldn't bear to see forsaken.

I was now responsible for her well being and I had to keep my feelings aside. But that was impossible. I was a holy fool falling fast in the river of my first love and I hadn't any idea of what a woman was capable of doing to me. The more time I spent with her the deeper my emotions ran and the more I floated from the rocks of reality. The mirage of my own mania was beginning to be cultured in the creativity of a cosmic conscience that hadn't the wisdom to reason away. We spent our days in the park listening to the radio underneath the shade of a tree and the garden never grew more glorious in my life than when I was with the heart of a philosopher. At night we talked

about life and the existence of God and such a power upon our paths was calling us closer to consummate ourselves in the concentration of creativity. She told me that she had always wanted to be God and had a bit of a complex. Ever since she was young she wanted to know everything there was to know and sought sight in every path that made its way to the top of the mountain. "Like the hawk", she would say. Flying high above the world with eyes that see for miles in the majesty of mania. She was in a situation where she didn't view the big picture and I did. As fool hearted as I was I knew what was going on in her life more so than she did. And she looked to me for pieces of the puzzle. I had never had a responsibility of this significance and the segments of circumstance came in the form of my own concerns about the situation. I was very cautious in progressing with the relationship. We often talked about dreams that we had. But she never had any dreams. She claimed it was because she already knew everything that was going on, but she really didn't and continued the denial of her mania. She insisted that everytime we meet I tell her what I dreamt the previous night. I thought it was unfair that I should be the only one who was sharing my dreams, but I went along with it. One night I had a dream that her boyfriend was in the hospital and gasping for air saying that he couldn't breathe without her. I wasn't sure about telling her about this but she insisted. She was disturbed by the dream and worried about her boyfriend. Soon after, we were talking about other things and she altogether forgot about him again as usual. I imagine that was how he actually felt. I was conflicted. I

had to tell her that in good conscience. But I risked revealing a piece of the puzzle that she could have cared less about if it came from anyone else. She listened to me and I was in a position of importance in her life. But I was also in a position of causing her episode to come to an end. I was very happy with her by my side. I was only human. I wanted to believe that she knew what she was doing with me and I wanted to have faith in her age, as she knew of life more than I did. I wanted to believe that our friendship was going to remain an innocent exchange of ideas. But there was no escaping that it was so much more than that in the undercurrents of both of our minds. I knew I was prolonging this episode more so than I should have. But I wasn't a doctor or a therapist and I couldn't carry that responsibility. I was a friend that offered her my innocence. I let her have control of my heart and put complete trust in her. She always told me that she had a great deal of respect for me because I came to her openly and never tried to be anyone other than myself. But I knew deep down that the feelings that we had for each other were making the friendship much more intense. More so than either of us anticipated.

One night we took a long ride to the beach. We spent our summers as children in the sands of boundless souls that supported our feet with the warmth of the sun. We knew the seashore to bring our families together and gather a great communion of life in the harmony of the sky upon the water. The ocean was the one work of wonder that always brought a paradise upon the playful hearts of all our joy as we once shared a community of friends and family. But

that was years ago and the concert of creation that celebrated the gifts of this wonderful environment went in directions that separated the family of friends. We all belonged to the congregation of a Catholic concert and it was a fundamental fountain from which I sprang. This was the one beauty of my childhood that I miss more than words can say. There was a large collection of characters in the faith of God that once worshiped the tide and watched the sun set upon the beauty of another day. Our sunburns left us memories to savor for our sleep in the cold steel of the city and gave us hope to come together again in the innocence of the sun. Our winters were works of slumber in the seeds that waited beneath the snow to join again in the breath of rebirth. We could have worshiped no greater globe of glory than the one that reminded us of our community. But those days died and the ocean was left to linger around my island of remembrance. Such an island in the threaded quilt of my psyche is one covering worth remembering in the cold that comes to haunt me in my veins as I forage in the forests of an older age. The gathering of God's children gave way to the diseases that drain the earth with the reality of this new world so desensitized in its own disgust. I grew up with the degradation of society and lost my sense of belonging, as I once knew the world to be strong in the foundation of my youngest years. It seems such a dream that I once knew joy in the company of others and had a name that meant something in the struggles of my marriage to the migraine. I was an identity of design as though I had been crowned with a Native American initiation unto this world as one that

feels the stress of the sacred stone weighing in the water of creation. This young woman made me long to feel the sands beneath my feet and believe that we could recapture our innocence as we once knew to play the waves in their washing away of our troubles. I remember sitting on the rocks looking out at the ocean. It had begun to slowly drizzle as it had been raining on and off the whole time we knew eachother. "I think its going to rain forever." She said as she put a towel around me to keep me warm. It was an act of kindness that endeared her to me even more. The cool exterior of self centered behavior that she had when we first met vanished into that of gentle compassion. We both knew where this relationship was headed. I became more and more hesitant to express how I felt about her. But she was one that couldn't hold it in any more. When we went back to the car I proceeded to start it up when she stopped me. "We can sit for a while." She said. I felt myself drawing closer and closer to her with the passing of each moment we were together and this was weighing heavily on me. I was often confused about how to act on my feelings and whether she wanted me to or not. I didn't dare make an attempt to be intimate. Not just because of the situation but because that was not how I operated with women. I knew where she was going with her conversation. It made me paranoid in a way. We had been avoiding the subject for a while and the feelings started to build. I was weary of prophetic circumstances and the course the relationship was taking. Once the bubble burst between us and our feelings came to a conscious level things were never going to be the

same. I think she was frustrated with my patience and my hesitance to advance the relationship. I tried to keep her from telling me about her feelings, as I didn't really want to progress things in that direction. But it was pointless and she was running a race that didn't see the wall in front of her. While we were driving she kept playing a song by Tori Amos. I think the name of it was *Silent All These Years*. She kept singing to it and was manic more than I could bear. Her howling had reached the pinnacle of pushing the issue to a point that left me powerless before the fire of her heart. Out of nowhere she finally said, "Jon, I'm just going to be blunt with you. My feelings for you go deeper than just friendship." It surprised me that she came out and said it despite the situation she was really in with her family and boyfriend. But I wasn't surprised at all that the feelings were there. I just don't know what she expected of me. I told her that I felt the same way, but that I wished the circumstances under which we had met were different. Then I told her that I was afraid of jeopardizing the friendship. I said that I wasn't one hundred percent sure that she was over her relationship with her boyfriend. I even told her that I felt as though my relation kept her from resolving issues with her family. She didn't see it that way. She didn't want the friendship to end either, and assured me that she was completely and utterly over her boyfriend. So over him that she tattooed it on my brain with a pitchfork of fire. She said that she had no feelings for him whatsoever. I knew the denial of her condition and I knew she was suffering from a manic episode. And I knew better than to argue with

someone that had the fire of madness embedded in the divinity of his or her machine. She was in a garden in the sky that grew of glory from the clouds. She needed only to dig just a bit deeper into the reality of earth before she saw her home and situation. I was crossed between believing her and knowing that she was eventually going to come to her senses. We had a long drive home. It was at least a half an hour. I have to say that I was thoroughly turned on by her declaration. No other woman made me feel that way before. Before this I never thought that I was going to encounter a woman that longed to be with me as I with her. And I never thought I was ever going to have the chance again. "I knew it was going to be intense. I just didn't think it was going to be this intense!" She said as if we both burned in the grip of our wills with only one desire to bond our bodies in a forbidden love. And everything about the situation forbid it. I didn't expect this much concentration in the connection of our creativity to arouse as much passion either. And my own mania was floating away from the foundations of the situation as I tried in vain to reel in the reality of my own foothold. I felt a throbbing flow of blood throughout my body that was in synch with the situation and I suppose that if anything I found out that I wasn't entirely impotent to women. But there was an awkwardness between us and she had it in mind to create it no matter what. Everything was out in the open for the first time and all of a sudden there was no where to go. Well, there was a place to go but neither of us was willing to take the first step. I shied away from displays of affection and she knew it. If I felt

comfortable with the situation I'm sure I wouldn't have been so reserved. I don't remember what we talked about on the way home. I don't even remember if we talked about anything. It seemed that words were mute at this point. I do remember her saying, "Rod Sirling could have never written anything as weird as my life." I then said, "Life can be surreal sometimes." She laughed and said, "Surreal isn't the word." Then she said, "I wish I wasn't so attractive." I didn't understand why she said that. That confused me. As if she wished I wasn't attracted to her. But the whole time I knew her she was hoping that I was. She was the one who kept pushing the friendship towards its inevitable outcome. She had a furious race to the finish line of everything and operated much faster than I was ever accustomed to. "Why don't we take things a bit slower." I said, as I couldn't handle that much intensity myself.

Before coming home she asked if I could stop at a convenience store. "Sure." I said. "What do you need?" "I need a reality check." She said as she laughed and asked me for some change. I took some change out of my back pocket and handed it to her. "Its awfully warm." She said with a smile. I smiled back as she headed into the store to touch base with what she could still see of her true situation. As we left the store she said, "I need to get my priorities in order." I had a feeling I wasn't going to be one of them and I knew as much in the deepest layers of the situation during the entire friendship. But I had fed fervently on the passions pulsating through the air of both our breaths as we walked a bit higher than either could bear unto the

clouds of our coincidental encounter. When we reached her aunt's house I asked her if I could have time to think over whether or not to advance the friendship. After asking this she smiled and said, "The ball is in your court."

I now had a lot to consider and I was in a whirlpool of indecision. Yet I wasn't being allowed to escape the force of fire that hungered in her heart. I had to think about her boyfriend and her family and how they would react to this. I had to think about her being manic and if her attraction to me wasn't just a result of that. I didn't want to believe that it was. I didn't know what to do, but I knew that I didn't want to be alone. I had eaten off of the desert floor for a duration as cold as death and I was starving for companionship. I had found someone in life that I felt comfortable with. Someone that I thought I would never find again in the dismal and shallow ruins of the earth. We were stargazers and of the same spark that was madly making its way through the beauty of our brains. Nothing in this world could have been more perfect if I chose to put my faith in her path and believe that she was the wiser of us both in the maintenance of her mania. I could have let my life lead me to a miserable death in the release of reality that she sought to suggest I do. Yet at this point I was taken under completely and hadn't the common sense left to calculate the course of her character.

I took a week to think things over. When I asked her if I could think about it she said, "That's what I like about you, you like to think about things." I had made up my mind. I wanted to further the

relationship. But when I met with her again something had changed. I think I let go for too long. She seemed different, more detached. Sitting outside by the river she said, "I don't know what to do with you." I could tell she had time to think about things and more pieces of the puzzle seemed to fill her eyes, as I was becoming the dead weight in her list of priorities. We went inside and sat in her room for a while. She gave me a letter that she wrote for me expressing her feelings. The first line read, "Jonny, I don't know why I'm writing this, you will probably never read it." In the letter she talked about how she had fallen in love with my mind. A woman has never admired me for anything but my mind. And its rather ironic that it's the one thing they take away from me. According to her this was backwards from anything she has ever done before. Usually she looked for a physical attraction first and worried about what was upstairs after she had already committed herself to the relationship. She wrote that she would die if another woman were to get to me first. She really had it in her mind to be the first cut I receive in the misery of love. She claimed that she knew I was the one for her. She wrote that she knew the future but after meeting me she didn't know what to foretell. She went on and on and even expressed her fears of rejection and that she didn't feel she deserved me. My own feelings were mirrored to an exact union of what we both hungered for in the garden of our creation that wished away the worries of everyone else. And it surprised me to see the depth of her emotions in the written word, as I wasn't one to be as articulate with my feelings. I wanted to believe

that they were real. And so I did. But by this time I could see how frustrated she was that I was so hesitant to return her affections. While we were talking she said, "You try to take the human element out of everything." She was right. I was content with an intellectual relationship. I would have enjoyed the physical aspect of it, but I was clumsy with my affections and could have disappointed her terribly. As much as I was coming to desire intimacy it was something that I feared might lose her respect. And considering the circumstances it wasn't something that was going to last. I was afraid the friendship would suffer from it. The whole time I knew her I tried to push that away. But from the beginning she suggested I came for a relationship and that was what she wanted to strive towards. I fell into the flowing emotions that raised from her chest with every breath she took and couldn't help but believe that I was the air that gave her life. Somehow we found ourselves lying in bed reading about Krishna. Soon after she fell asleep by my side. I assumed she wanted me to stay with her. In the early hours of the morning she woke up and began caressing my shoulder and arm. Slowly moving her hand up and down my body. I had never been close to a woman in a way that felt the warmth of the morning consumed in the gates of heaven. I felt the frigid impotence of my sexual being come to life in a way I never thought possible again. This lasted for a good half an hour. Then she held me very tightly and close to her. She was almost masculine in her seduction. But that was as far as it went. She ruined it for me by asking if I was going to be missing in action. Then she

said, "I don't want your mother to come after me." My mother would have too. Even in the arms of another woman I could not escape the clutches of my mother. In that I sat up. "Thank you." I said. "Why are you thanking me? I didn't even kiss you." She asked curiously. I let out a deep breath of frustration and didn't say anything else.

When the morning arrived we walked outside and sat by the river next to the apartment complex. She looked at me and said, 'I'm just not ready for a relationship." Then she said, "If there is any confusion it is on your part." She was damn right there was confusion, but it wasn't just on my part. If anything she was building me up to this point. She was working to mystify me in the climax of a state that she had been guiding me towards. It was impossible to figure out what her intentions for leading me on to this moment of enlightenment were. She let me invest my hopes and dreams into a situation that she planned to dissolve. She directed me into this predicament as if it were a program that she was running guided by the divine insight of Krishna. "I wish you could see yourself the way I see you." She said as she reached over to lift my head with her hand. "I feel like I did when I was back in college. Everything is new." I had given myself in to the belief that I was born yesterday and having gotten close to her I may as well have been. Of what sense I had left it seemed an awful lot to me like I had just been dumped. And it was even before the relationship had progressed. I couldn't fathom for the life of me why. I felt used with the simplistic programming of a pawn designed to move her boyfriend into a position of deep insecurity. I felt there

had to have been something so wrong with the potential of my character to please her in a relationship. She was so insane about furthering the friendship and all of a sudden she decided to throw it all away. I didn't understand what the point of having me spend the night was for if she was just going to have a sudden revelation in the morning. She went on talking about the privilege of touch as if she was trying to teach me some kind of lesson. She was the one who couldn't keep her hands off of me. Not vice versa. "I can't say I didn't want to." She said as if I had been the one to suggest to her that I spend the night. If I knew she was only going to run me into a wall I wouldn't have gotten my hopes up to see them hit face first into the bricks. But all the time I knew she was sick. I always knew it was no ones game but hers and I was to bow before her and play along. I allowed myself to get sucked into it despite the facts that had always been presenting themselves to me. "I have so much respect for you." She claimed as we proceeded to say goodbye. Then she told me to call her. I was now in a position that every man dreams of. I was to be blessed with her friendship after being run into a dead end road of rejection that she planned to spring upon me the whole time. I was crushed and foolishly let my trust bring me to her suddenly new and unfamiliar face.

I went home that morning and balled my eyes out. I had never touched upon the misery of love in the pain that shatters the heart. I should have tasted this experience at a much younger age, but I hadn't lived life and was very much a late bloomer. This was a new

experience for me and it felt the world was weighing on the death of my soul as my sensitivity had been through the ringer of reality. I was never close to a woman before and it burned deliriously in my dumbfounded naivete that the one I did get close to was so careless. Later that night I got drunk and passed out on my parent's lawn. I remember my brother walking by me. He wasn't about to disturb my misery. I couldn't bear it. The days went on and I didn't call her. I had no idea what to say to her and she had flat out humiliated me with her rejection. I wanted her to know how I felt. What I couldn't put into words I gathered in love songs on tape and sent it to her. Then I found out a week later that she had moved back in with her boyfriend. So much for not being ready for a relationship. I can't say with certainty when she made this decision or what her real reasons were, but it left me devastated when I found out second hand from her cousin. I guess she got her priorities in order and realized that I was not on the top of the list. She had dug that hole in the garden and seen the earth below. The symbolism that was defining the friendship had come to life. The moment was gone and the situation became all too real. It all seemed to go according to her scheme. I had let a part of myself imagine away a future of endless orgasms in the glory of the sunset. I was every bit the fool that I allowed myself to be. And I was blinded by the possibilities of love and what that was going to mean to a dropout like myself. I realized for the first time the great inspirational value of a woman, with whom my potential was unlimited. But the fruits of love that I had imagined were of the

gravity of a situation that was out of my control. Everything was built on sand and in an instant came falling apart around me.

I was in a state of confusion that I had never known. I've never felt the influence and weight of a woman's soul before. This was something that was expanding my mind into the far corners of madness where I was giving in to the door of death. It had been so excruciating to discover how I had let myself become a child in her game of leading me to my own demise. I gave her what was still very active of my innocence, as my experience in life had fallen short of my age. And as painful as it was to be so young in my heart at a stage in life where I should have known the concrete and steel of the city's wrinkles she did nothing but bring that pain to a point of unbearable misery. I was now even more a youth in the age of an adult as I had never known to experience the way of a woman. The boy that I had been for so long in life was always being punished for his place within my heart. Such was my greatest cross in life. As heartbroken as I felt I never knew a more splendid pain. And my mind needed to be reorganized into a coherent fashion. It needed to be done so quickly before I found myself checking into the hospital again. I turned to my creative outlets as the one source of sanity in the sickness of this sudden hole of hell that had swallowed me. I began a project trying to work on creating the spinning wheel and it was the one spontaneous product of my imagination that offered stability. The natural burst of creativity had helped me many times before to bring order to my life and organize my psyche in the trenches of

turmoil. It did indeed bring me some comfort. The work of a three dimensional design of delight had begun and I labored like a little boy in the reverie of a daydream that reverted to the foundations of preexistence. When I finished I had come out of the cave to the wonder of a wheel that reminded me that I could be the sane soldier in the reinvented consciousness of creation. My art was the only healer in my life. And with a flip of a switch the wheel would spin its joy around my eyes and reorganize my thoughts to gather in grace before the center of the sun. Just like my vision. The wheel was very hypnotic and the one thing that kept me focused from falling apart. I would stare at it for hours in an attempt to suggest to myself that the workings of my mind were reunifying in order to cope with the situation I found myself in. And having given my heart to a woman I desperately needed to be brought to the brilliance of something that had the answers. I knew no other speaker of God than the connection to my own inner voice and I gazed upon the magic of my own mind to find the solution to this terrible pain. It had cut me so deep and there was never anything in life that could have prepared me for falling face first for a woman that walked with madness. I brought the sculpture of salvation with me wherever I went. I showed it to everyone. I was a glorious eccentric and more than childlike in my understanding of what I was going through. But it was the medicine men of my imagination that were the only elders I knew in life to help me make sense of anything that ever came upon me in the foothold of flesh. I knew no other gods to soothe me with sanity than the ones that lived

their lives in the celestial realm of my reverie where I could touch upon the reality of a much greater world. All I wanted to do was stare at the spinning rings as they reminded me of a promise to praise me with paradise. And I imagined a future of creative fountains where I would bask in the solitary rooms of meditation and partake of the grail that I could create in a splendid masterpiece of perception. If I only had the power to take this project to its perfected position of bliss upon the border of reality. As I have read in times of emotional turmoil the mind tends to spontaneously produce mandalas. I was well aware of the healing effect of these magic circles. Having my art was always a palace of perception where I could see things that the eyes knew not to know on an ordinary passage through the mundane travels of meaninglessness. I had a soundtrack to my life and it was loud with colors of vibrancy that mirrored the mental states of which I was to someday arrive. It was always my abnormality that made me both a virtuoso of the violin in its sorrowful story of sound and a child of forever in the weight of the womb. The sheer power of my right brain was so Herculean I was never to be born unto an ordinary world.

I received a response from the tape of love songs that I had sent to her. She dropped it off with my brother. There was a letter along with a document of her philosophy. We were both eccentrics and she was burning with the devastation of her genius as she sought to set fire to everything she touched. The letter was a poem that she had written for me. It was all about the river of time and I've never

known a more upsetting expression in the suggestion that I float with the current that is only to lead me through the pain of her passions as a prisoner of her heart. It was too painful to save and was more than confusing in the riddle of her tongue. I remember that it said to follow the river of time. According to her it was one of pleasure and deceit and she knew the texture of those two in the sickness of her sudden escapade to hurt everyone she could get her hands on. She was ready and willing to lead me off of the edge for her own amusement. Where she thought that river led I didn't know, but I imagined if it was going to lead me to more of her lunacy it may as well lead me to death. I had already found out that she moved back in with her boyfriend and a letter like that defied all logic and common sense. She was a drawing of M. C. Etcher and I didn't understand how the perspectives could be so perplexed in their objection of natural laws. She also gave me a CD. It was Pink Floyd. I don't remember what album it was. It was a compilation of different songs and it had a blinking light on it that pulsed like a heartbeat. Some of the songs were live. But if anyone knows Pink Floyd then they know that they border on insanity. Their entire career has walked with the fire of the edge. All of their songs are practically inspired by Syd Barrett, a former band member who became mentally ill and retreated from the world. I sent her love songs by the Beatles and she sent me *Brain Damage/Eclipse.* Along with the CD she also sent me a piece of paper that had numbers along with each of the songs. Threes and fours were next to each song and she thought herself clever enough to

speak to me only in the riddles of reality. She hadn't a straightforward bone in her body when she was sick. And she was glorious with games of fire that could have seen me succumb to the master that I feared forever in the face of the absurd. And it was simply because she was bored with life and wanted to live the passions of her mania. In front *of Brain damage/eclipse* she wrote a four with a question mark and then a smiley face. *The lunatic* was in my head all right. By this time I was utterly confused and upset to a point of putting a noose around my neck as she guided me into the recesses of her own insanity. I wasn't accustomed to venturing deeply into a woman's mind and I was probably much better off not doing so. I had absorbed so much from her psyche that it began to overwhelm me in an ocean of nature's rage and ravaging waves. If this was what she pulled on me I can only imagine how she destroyed her boyfriend who happened to know her much longer than I. I began to realize that I made a miserable mistake by getting close to her and was now knee deep in the shit of her insanity. And the worst of it was that I couldn't escape the feelings that I had for her no matter how hard I tried to endure the evidence. She left me with signals mixed in madness and mayhem and expected I be the fool that followed her river to the ruins of reality where the pieces fall apart and for nothing but to cater to her majesties mania.

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as though she was swelling in her eyes with the salt of the sea. I think she took a long look at herself and her situation and was realizing her mania for the first time. I felt such sympathy as I had been through this with her in trying to bring a closure to her episode. She said something about both of us jumping off of a bridge and I knew this was so much more than I had ever known in relation with another. I could hardly handle the weight upon my heart as it was dragging me down to the depths of an empathy that was ready to jump with her. We decided to meet at the park. I got there early and waited for her. When she came we talked for a while and mostly discussed the state of our friendship. She told me how important my friendship was to her. I knew that we had a friendship that was rare in our ability to share anything we wanted. But it was also important for other reasons. Her boyfriend was jealous of me. I was very confused. I now wanted more than just a friendship, but that was out of the question. At the same time I didn't think I could remain a friend with her after she had expressed her feelings to me only to return to seeing her boyfriend. Something like that was ripping my reality into the harsh hell of winter. My feelings for her were now much more intense than I ever expected them to be. I couldn't return to the innocence of my perceptions as I saw her once before in our first encounter within the grass and flowers of the garden. The summer breeze upon the branches of the whispering leaves had turned to snow quite suddenly. She made a point of stepping outside the boundary of the bubble that once held our feelings in purity and she was foolish to think that

suddenly we could return to the children of a faithful friendship that hadn't eyes in undercurrents of sexual appetite. I tried to tell her how she hurt me but the words just wouldn't come. I apologized to her repeatedly and she didn't understand why. I didn't want to be the one to bring her crashing to the conclusion of her episode by shutting my door in her face, but it seemed I had that responsibility. She could tell that I was in pain but hadn't a clue that she caused it. Somehow she thought her friendship was going to make up for it. She said, "I'm being honest with you." I tried hard not to be upset when she said that. It was a little too late for honesty. She should have been honest in the first place and kept from playing her game of denial. But I couldn't say anything. I knew that everything was a question of her illness and no matter what she had in mind I couldn't fault her as I knew myself to be of the same thread in the thunder of my own mind. I tried my best to understand her situation. She said, "I could never hurt you." But she had already taken it upon herself to do so. Then she said, "I'm offering you a friendship for a lifetime." This was an offering from the gods had they been looking down upon my journey through the desert for ages. But I was reluctant to take it. "I don't know if that's worth it", I told her. We had a flirtatious friendship and the thought of this for a lifetime was confusing me just a bit. I didn't want to believe I was simply a pawn in her relationship with her boyfriend. And maybe she didn't see it that way on a conscious level. But in the greater scheme of this relation that was one of my roles. I had never before been in a more complex situation and as

miserable as it was I still didn't want to see her go. She was the first person in this world that I had ever known to be a dreamer of the unconscious and she spoke to me of a creative philosophy that I had a hard time letting go. I knew no one else in life with the wisdom of the road less traveled. Again I told her that I would have to think about it and perhaps I could be clever enough to hit her with reality without losing her at the same time.

I called her later that night. I had prepared a speech and written it down. I tried to think things through as much as I could because I knew how sensitive a situation it was. And I also knew that quite a few people that I respected were observing how I dealt with this, as I once knew them rather well as a child. When I talked to her on the phone I read it word for word as I never was very good at articulating off of the top of my head. I told her that she had hurt me whether she realized it or not. I apologized to her for sounding so formal. She began to cry as she said, "Oh Jonny, I didn't mean to hurt you." I felt like such an asshole. I always knew I was going to be the one. As her boyfriend said to me, "I'm glad she picked you." I gave her the garden that she initially went off of her medications to find and I suppose I shouldn't have. As the keeper of the grounds in which I allowed her the absolute freedom to walk wherever she wanted with her philosophy the burden was always in my hands. It was my responsibility to see her through to the conclusion of her episode, but I didn't want to lose her in the process. I had to be the one to hit her between the eyes with the truth and that was a role that I wasn't ready

for at my current level of maturity in life. This whole predicament of problems was weighing more than I could handle as I got mixed up too deeply in offering my friendship to her. I was still much too young at heart to know how to deal with these circumstances with the certainty of what I was doing. But she was only going to see it from me and I was the one person that she had complete trust in. I didn't want that responsibility, but from the beginning I always knew it was mine. I wanted to still remain friends with her but at the same time I could no longer be entirely open with her. She wanted everything from me. She wanted the entire emotional and intellectual stimulus that her boyfriend could not offer her. She wanted everything that comes with a relationship, everything but the sex. I was compensation for her boyfriend's inadequacies. I made it clear to her that I could not be the person who she expected to confide in her about everything. She wanted me to be the one to merge my soul with hers in a union of brother and sister with a romantic spirit that tasted each other's creativity in the current of our blood. If she wanted my friendship there had to be some kind of buffer between us. She was definitely hurt by that because we had an innocent sharing of thoughts and feelings that was sacred to us both. We were like little kids together avoiding the realities that surrounded us and doing a good job at it. But now we were back on the chain gang and we had our paths in life. They didn't necessarily parallel each other and the worst of my fears was that they wouldn't.

I had wanted her to see how much she hurt me by leading me on. But it upset me even more to hear her the way she was and I hated myself for it. We met again a few days later but now I had placed her on the ground and couldn't have rooted her more in the earth. I picked her up at her parent's house and was about to behold the decent of her plane as it came crashing in flames of torment and tortured intelligence. She brought a spiritual book with her about reaching success in creativity. She had been hounding me to utilize my talents in a tree of branching beauty before the world where I could propagate my potential. I had been hoping for a simpler solution to life's success and often wished only to work with mundane procedures that I might avoid my own madness. But everyone had eyes for me to do something incredible with my individuality, as it was such a calendar of creation in the many seasons of my gifts. She was in a position that had not the strength to offer me guidance in any chosen field. After about five minutes she began talking about suicide. She was crashing right on top of me. I told her, "You have to be an asshole to do that to the people who love you." It wasn't the most sensitive thing to say. But it was true. And if she did so I was never going to get over it. Our final destination was a park situated by a river. We sat by the river and talked for a while. She was visibly shaken and the earth was crumbling beneath her feet as she danced deliriously to stay above ground. I could tell that her seesaw had been swallowed by gravity and she was grieving in the hell of the grave. She talked about how looking back she should have listened to her

family. And that they were all right when they said that she was manic. Then she went off into left field and began cursing child molesters. I think that the work that she did at the hospital had a very dramatic impact on her. I was always a bit distressed when someone lashed out at these people because I had been scarred with suspicion in the past. And memories of my adolescents left me to wonder if I was to bear the cross of those feelings forever. I don't remember much else of the conversation that we had that day. She longed to run away where we could establish a commune and recapture what was sacred of our community as children. But it wasn't plausible upon the paths that were now before us. And the innocence that we once knew so long ago in the glory of gatherings had fallen to a feast of directions that scattered about the earth and learned to talk with tongues of diversified dialect. "Is this hell?" she asked. I wasn't sure myself, but there was always a temple in the trenches of torment that sheltered me from the shadows of Satan. I had to believe that no matter how violent the storm raged in the madness of our minds there was a place that couldn't be touched in the sanctuary of our salvation. It was one of the more disturbing experiences of my life to see her like that. I hadn't had anything in life that could have prepared me for someone's fall from grace with whom I had been so close to. When I brought her home I gave her the spinning wheel that I had made. It was a bundle of faith that the elders of my ancestry thought I had wisdom enough to build in her honor and ease her transition unto the rocks of reality with the joy of creation. I was indeed as eccentric as I

could possibly imagine. But it was my poetic play on situation that was the one founding principle of my character that made me dear to her. She took it from me with her eyes swelling and her voice shivering in the sadness of the collapse. "Well, at least this will make me happy." She said. I've never felt worse before in my life and this was a moment I knew colder than death to last me in memory as we severed the beauty of our mania. I felt a frigid estrangement as though we had never walked with each other through the flowers of our creativity and I never saw her again.

We spoke on the phone a few more times, but that was it. I still had hoped to see her again and suddenly felt so lost without her as if I had been abandoned in my childhood. We talked once after she attempted suicide. I can't say that this didn't scare the shit out of me. I could have never really known for sure how much of an impact I had on her. I did know that I was the one to flower her mania and the same person to bring it to a screeching halt. Somehow that was all I needed to know when I heard of her attempt. But now she was safely in the company of her family and her boyfriend. Though I imagined her feelings of being misunderstood by them played a significant part. I went over the course of our friendship with a magnified glass looking for what I should have done differently and I analyzed it to death wondering if I should even have gotten involved. There were no easy answers and I was very confused about my part in this. I was grateful that she didn't succeed and had still hoped to someday see her again.

In the aftermath of this passionate relation of a creative philosophy and tragic circumstance I continued completing scrimshaw for my uncle. I did so despite the paranoia that I felt about my relationship with him and the world he introduced me to. Though at the same time I was also doing work with the airbrush. I had started to do T-shirts for friends of the family. In my relation to this young woman I was inspired to triumph a creative course if only to appease her as it was what she wished for me through our friendship. I didn't know what else was expected of me and couldn't bear the reality that she had no need for me anymore as a friend. I found solace in only my art. It was the one friend I knew never to leave. Suddenly everyone wanted a shirt and word of mouth began to spread. But I had no idea how to run a business and I may as well have been playing with toys. Someone promised me success and I knew no other vessel than my art. I always risked quite a lot in the hope of this Frankenstein. I decided to give up on the scrimshaw and concentrate on the T-shirts. I didn't believe that the scrimshaw was taking me anywhere. After all, it left me on the horse broken and defeated at *The End of the Trail* without any orders coming in for my work. It was a perfect symbol to characterize the gut wrenching struggle of my life. And a power of unconscious forces that were leading me to the annihilation of beauty and freedom that for a short time made passionate love to the ideals and possibilities of my inner world. I could never imagine myself adjusting to the shows with a heart as open as my own. There was a great deal of pressure to fit in with the

rugged outdoorsman and the Old World of thought and ego that made me feel as though I wasn't even a man.

Before I decided to stop doing the scrimshaw my uncle and I met with one of the better known custom knife makers. He was the one that was so impressed with the surrealization of the first knife that I did. He was going to teach me how to engrave. He lived far out in the boondocks. His state of mind was just as distant in the far reaches of an Old World that spoke of magic upon the mountains of man's journey to the top. He wore a T-shirt that he had airbrushed with his face on it. He was a character of Oz and wrapped up in his individuality like a mirror that walked with the many reflections of his art. And unlike the others who went to the shows he had a great flare for creative and new styles. After giving me a brief lesson on engraving he said, "That's what it's all about." As he could see that I was having fun with the lesson. Something told me that he was in a position where the life of his art had lost its lust for living and become a mechanical process fueled by demand. I can't imagine a more miserable death of slow decay in the dead of ones own art. After the lesson we all sat down outside. We began talking about art and out of nowhere I asked him if he ever felt like it was too personal to sell. I continually had problems with this because my artwork has always been intimately threaded in the fabric of me. He sat back and said, "Woah!" It was a question that was out of synch with the typical collector and custom knife maker conversations. This wasn't something that they discussed at the shows. This was a subject that

played upon the unconscious mind and never was to be discussed as an unspoken law of professional courtesy. But I didn't go there for a lesson in engraving. I went there for something that I myself didn't understand. I went there with my heart belonging to a woman that had fallen on her face and forsaken our friendship for the reality of an uncontrollable world. I had only one purpose to please her wishes for me to acquire the consummation of my creativity. I was journeying through the trail of destiny and along the way were many pieces I need pick up to solve the riddle of my own fate. I knew it was an unusual question to ask. Yet I didn't expect it to strike a nerve as it caught him by surprise. He flashed back to his childhood and his father who had taught him that there are three steps to creating a work of art. He said, "First there is the inspiration. Then there is the actual labor involved in making the art. Then there is the release." He turned to me and said, "You can't fall in love with your art. You have to let it go." That was a problem for me because letting it go meant that I was exposing something personal about myself, which may be subject to rejection. And often I fell in love with the joy of creation to such a degree that my work was an extension of the very fabric of my psyche. Whether or not a work of art is good in the eyes of others there exists in me a chemical reaction of creation that loves my work in the sudden exclamation of Dr Frankenstein as he breathes life into his monster. It's a divine experience of a natural high that can only be produced by the imagination. And it offers me insight into the mind of God. The conception of creation is fueled by joy and the universe

was exhaled because creation is joy. Or at least I have to imagine so. He then gave me an analogy of a bow and violin, which are the art and business ends of the spectrum to which I needed to learn in order to weep within the world of success. For me there was always a way in which it needed to be done and it needed to be done for the right reasons. We talked for a while about other things and about how art has a way of playing games with the mind. "I know there is something evil out there. I can feel it following me when I go for walks through the woods around here." He said. There was some kind of metaphysical connection occurring in our conversation and our meeting of minds. I didn't fully comprehend the significance of the question I had asked him. He began to present me with the future. He talked about all the things that he had acquired through his art. Then he said, "You can have it if you want it. It's yours. It will take a lot of hard work and it is especially difficult around twenty-five, but you can do it." I didn't understand the relevance of the age. It was an odd conversation that was initiated by my own peculiarity. But he was the one who understood the knife that I scrimshawed. I was a holy fool that encountered a mind that knew the riddle of creation. This was someone who knew the dynamics of art and the comprehension of surreal circumstances. There was a certainty in my mind that he knew what he was talking about. So I always kept our discussion as a program running in the back of my mind. "Always do the type of art that you want to do." He said. I was always willing to explore foreign mediums as a simple test of my own abilities. I never

could imagine being an artist who had tunnel vision. I tried my hand at the Old World of expression. But there was concern on my part from the very beginning about using a knife as a canvas. If somebody were to kill someone with a knife that I had scrimshawed I didn't know how I would react. Also, knives are synonymous with guns. Most of the people who attended the knife shows were gun collectors. I felt very uneasy about being around firearms. I never intended to go back for another lesson. This was a spiritual journey to meet the Oz of creation. He imparted upon me all the wisdom that I needed no matter what medium I chose to explore. Even if that medium hadn't presented itself to me yet as a possibility. I felt blessed for having asked the question and imagined I was a traveler of surreal terrain upon the quest to regain the grail. I was indeed a maker of magical encounters that were to be remembered for the rest of my life.

My uncle was upset with my decision to quit the scrimshaw. He didn't say anything but I could see it in his face. I was his pet project and to leave him was an act of disloyalty. I still don't understand it. After all the time he and my other uncle spent busting my chops and insulting me he was aggravated when I decided to call it quits. One time while working on a job he actually asked, "Do you like little boys? I don't know." I didn't dignify it with a response. I worked my ass off for him. I imagine that in a job of hard labor this type of treatment is typical of the position. I was a sensitive individual in a world of tools and masculinity where the weak were prey for ridicule. But I ended up being disappointed, especially when I consider that he

was a family member. And also when I take into consideration that he knew my situation in life was not a good one I was hurt. My self-esteem was left in shambles. It didn't make sense to me. But I was accustomed to the ridicule anyway. Even to a point were I felt as though I deserved it. I guess if I was anyone else I was going to be treated the same way. So I tried not to take it personally. Though I thought he would have been relieved to get rid of me. I know I was relieved to put some distance between my relationship with him. Some personalities just don't mix well in certain situations. When I look back at it now it doesn't really upset me. It's much easier for me to have a relationship with my uncle where there are no strings or pressure to try to be someone that I am not

The T-shirts may have been a new beginning for me. I worked in honor of this young woman that had asked of me to take up my talents and pursue the paradise of my gifts. We hadn't talked very often but she claimed that we would meet again when her situation settled a bit more in sanity with her boyfriend. I felt frozen in the fields of hell and the hope of her friendship was something to keep me warm. Though I feared in the worst of my mind that I was never going to see her again. And in reality I knew it to be true. I had never been in a situation like this before and didn't know what to make of my sudden shut out in the cold. She made a promise to me that she was always going to be there and now I didn't know what to make of her words. I was never close to someone before in life and had fallen into the foolish faith that we were closer than I thought. I kept creating as my

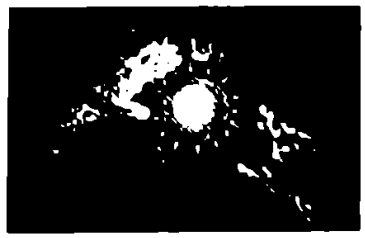
only means of emotional support. I designed a wide variety of shirts as they were all commissioned. For one person I painted a shirt with John Lennon on the front and Paul McCartny on the back. The images were taken from photos that came with the *White album.* I had surprised myself with the realism that I was able to portray. Most of the shirts I painted were photorealistic. I did one of Robert Dinero from the movie *Taxi Driver.* He was standing, holding two guns, which were pointed at the viewer. The person that commissioned this loves it more than anything and thinks that I am an extraordinary artist. But as someone that gets sucked into his art I had a hard time doing some of the work. Working for other people I always felt that I was submitting control of my mind over to the manipulation of alien images. Its as though I am being force-fed bizarre reflections that are of dreams unfolding before me in which I do not know the fate of their course. The creative process wraps my mind in the illusion that I create to a juncture of disillusion. Often commissioned work wreaks havoc on my sensibility and sucks me into a vacuum of someone else's world. I commend artists that prostitute their minds in a land that is not their own as I have had such hardships doing it myself. Somehow my extraordinary sensitivity as an artist always reminded me that I was never going to succeed with my art lest I found a way to market my own imagination.

I also completed a sweatshirt of a Pontiac GTO. It came out better than I had imagined. Everyone thought it looked like a photograph. I impressed a lot of potential customers with that

sweatshirt. People loved to see me do photorealism. Many people view that as the mark of a good artist. But I always thought it lacked imagination and it sure was not something that was dazzling with the cosmic flow of creation. The incorporation of realism into a surrealistic environment was always more my idea of what I wanted in my art. And my personal airbrush artwork was much wilder. For one of the pieces that I did for myself I airbrushed two arms coming from either side of the painting. I tried to make it appear as if they were the arms of whoever was viewing the painting as if the astral world was upon them in their sudden venture into the piece. The arms are transparent. They have a light blue outline, and you can see the bones within the arms and the hands - like an X-ray. In the center of the painting I placed a large yellow globe of glorious light. Electricity flowed from the sphere and took off in wild directions of energy and light. The remainder of the painting was filled with different colors of what look like veins. In a way it resembles an eye. The yellow sphere represents the iris while the colors reflect the veins within the eyeball. However, the arms may be looked at from two different vantage- points. In one way they are reaching out towards the sphere. From another perspective the arms are trying to protect the viewer from the power and intense energy that the sphere created.

I was inspired to do this painting from a dream I once had. The dream was very vivid. I saw my hand in front of me. In a conscious effort I was able to move it around and look at it. The hand was blue and transparent. I was trying to create the astral world and what

someone in the realm would see of their body. I don't know what the intensity of the sphere represented. It was a confrontation of something. I was going through a period of great confusion and felt the intensity of the world rushing in my face with the reality of the sun as it shone the bright lights of situation in the sorrow of separation. Something seemed to be stalking me into a corner of worthlessness had I not the strength to face the world and realize reality. The intensity of an inadequacy that couldn't render what was going on seemed inescapable during the worst of my battles with my brain. And there were times in life when I couldn't comprehend what I was going through, as it seemed so overwhelming to even recognize that there was a world in which I lived. Yet in an impressive contradiction of the bipolar aspect of my illness this was a dazzling display of psychic energy that I had waiting for me in the hope of the future. One day I was to touch upon the light in the caress of my hands as they merged with the energy of existence. I walked that line between the heights of ecstasy and the descents of suicidal obsessions. It's a strange feeling not to know whether you are going to put a gun to your head in the face of horror or touch upon the alchemy of greatness in the eye of God. However I planned to look at it the painting was the result of a fevered state. I did many other airbrush designs. Most of them were on shirts. The one thing I regret is that I never took photographs of any of the T-shirt designs that I did. I never thought that I would need them. Aspiring to be an airbrush designer it was foolish not to build a portfolio.



This painting was revealing to me of what was now left of my relation with this young woman that I now had to somehow accept. I didn't know how to embrace this farewell of fire that we had ignited in the purity of our creativity upon the poetry of our relation. We talked a couple of times more on the phone, but the distance between us grew. Her boyfriend would not allow her to see me. I was a threat. He saw me the way I would have seen myself even though I had no intentions of making an intimate connection with her. We were too close for his comfort and I can't blame him for feeling the way he did. He wasn't a fool and he knew that there was a lot of depth between her and I. But I could not stop thinking about her. She kept telling me that she would call me and that we would get together again. I had no experience with relationships and not a clue that she never intended to see me again. She claimed that her boyfriend needed to adjust but that we were going to still be friends. I had a feeling she wasn't giving me the complete story. She had made it clear to me that she placed a great importance on our friendship. And I was left to wonder what the hell was going on as I was dangled from a string of

promises. I know I shouldn't have but I ended up doing something very irrational and dangerous. It was one of the many foolish mistakes I have made in life and I never should have attempted it. I called her boyfriend and left a message on his machine asking him to call me. I don't even know why I did this. I was completely insane and hadn't a clue about anything anymore as I could have gotten carried away unto the death of her river. I guess I just wanted a straight answer and she wasn't giving me one. I wanted closure and she could have cared less if I waited in the wings with my head in my hands for the rest of my life. One-day she continually claimed, as our paths would once again cross in the current of our creativity to see each other in the fondness of friendship. She seemed to be leading me on again and I hadn't the strength to be patient for the rest of my life in the hope she was a woman of her word. She was offering me hope where there was none and hadn't it in her to be straightforward with me in the midst of her illness. I just wanted to get the story and I needed there to be a conclusion else I was going to go mad in the misery of empty promises. Either that or I was attempting suicide, which didn't seem like a bad idea at the time.

That same day when I went to my parent's house I was told that she had stopped by and was visibly disturbed. She heard the message that I left on the machine and erased it right away saying that her boyfriend who was an ex-marine would have killed me if he heard it. Suicide indeed. She left my mother a note for me. In the letter she basically said that she was trying to rebuild her relationship with her

boyfriend and that he was insanely jealous of me. In the letter she claimed that she was sick. And there it was. Everything that had come out of her mouth was due in part to her disease. I had to understand her situation simply because I was of the same madness in the many mirrors of my mind as they reflected the realities of my illness. And I had feared as much that her feelings towards me were a result of her mania. I was the fool with the task of believing her as I let her play whatever game she wanted in the garden. She apologized for dragging me into all of this. I felt like a disposable human being and never before knew my mirror to be so detached from myself. In her own words it was as though I had been nothing to her and I was worthless more than I could imagine. The whole experience seemed a lot like my ventures on LSD. My notion of love was on the base of a cloud and that was where it all ended. The meaninglessness of my life had begun in the majesty of a pine that was falling in the forest. Even I wasn't sure if I made a sound. I was so stupefied by how the fire of femininity was so capable of screwing me up that I could only imagine I had been damned to die every day for the rest of my life. If this was what it was to know a woman I need not know anything but the misery of a worthless world were I wasn't wanted. She gave birth to a young man that didn't know whether or not he was dead or alive and I hated her for it. She found a center in me and tore it apart like I never knew someone to do before. It took me many long years to forgive her. I now knew my life had begun in being alone. I never was meant to know anyone for very long. I had crossed a threshold

unto a world where everyone was worthless and the human being became a monster of a devouring appetite that was never to be trusted again. This left me scarred more than I could possibly imagine. No one had ever reached into my heart so deeply and carelessly. She only wanted to damn me in the river of rejection. I was now even less than human. The world wasn't worth the effort. I gave up on everything and buried the beauty of my inner world where it would take a miracle to uncover.

I tried to go on with my life the best I could as if nothing had ever happened. But in reality I had grown dangerously bitter and the only reason for living was the fear of dying. I had never felt such majestic heights of love for another human being. I had no idea that I was capable of such passionate thoughts and feelings. I absorbed every ounce of her mania and was myself manic. To crash from the throne of gods was something I couldn't handle. I was to never see her again. It was as if a family member had died. The time that we spent together may have only lasted a couple of months. But it was the quality of time that we shared which made it so invigorating. I felt so close to her that it seemed as if we were in each other's company for years. To see it suddenly end bore a vacuum in my inner world. I was cast back into a life of misery in a world of the living dead.

I hadn't the lust for creation or success. However I was almost commissioned to do T-shirts for the town's football team. The job fell through. Because my T-shirts also advertised my artwork the publicity generated from that order might have been enough to get my

business off the ground. Everyone was going to know me after that. I don't think that the woman who wanted the shirts thought I was able to handle such a large order. Or maybe she didn't like the sample T-shirts that I did for her son. I don't know. Maybe it was because my hair was long and they thought I liked little boys. It seemed to be the thing to think. Whatever the case it left me rather depressed. It may have been my first step towards financial independence. Instead, all the orders stopped. I soon came to see that my life was in another direction that was suddenly terrifying me. All meaning and myth encircling the great circumference of my creativity had handed over to the dogs of a destiny. They foamed their damning curse upon my slumber. I was to walk in the world not willing to awake.

Frustrated with the lack of demand I was receiving for my art I put it down and moved on to other areas. My life as an artist had failed miserably. And though my imagination never let me sleep for too long I wanted to know what it was like to live in an ordinary world. Being as dead as I could possibly be I hoped to know a mundane mountain that I could climb. One in which there was certainty in the faith of the system. I bought a second hand computer and spent all of my free time staring at a monitor. My grandfather and one of my uncles taught me the basics. They were both computer hobbyists. I picked up the rest as I went along. For a while my life became meaningless and digital. I abandoned my passions for art as I thought they were not going to take me anywhere at the time. My grandfather agreed and insisted that I take up the logical and ordinary. I fell into a

world of computations and programs. The human element was removed once and for all as I synchronized this thinking thing with a machine. It had everything I ever wanted in a friend except for an imagination. The spark that ignited thought was there. But there was no creative process to initiate its own programming without my input. There had to be some uses for creative expression with this primitive mind. This had to be Frankenstein's monster. I knew there was a bridge between my mind and the 1's and 0's that kept this instrument harmonizing with my thoughts. One day I was certain that my imagination was going to transfer into the soul of circuitry. There was to come a time when I was going to literally be able to walk across that bridge just as I walk down the street. The possibilities of this endless evolution that was going to transpire between mind and machine were enough to keep me interested in what was presently simplistic. Even as I slept through the pointless path of life my medicine men knew enough to dream for me. There was voodoo in the visionary. They blessed my brain with seeds that waited beneath the snow of my apathetic avenue.

As I was making a difficult transition into this lonely love affair with circuitry I had one of my regular visits with my doctor. As usual he asked me how I was feeling. I told him the truth. I was feeling like shit. He went on to question me in depth about why and I told him about what had recently happened with this young woman. Then he said, "Well Jon, I'm not your therapist. All I do is give out your meds." Some doctors believe that they have full authority over

knowing every facet of the patient's life. Sometimes when you see a psychiatric doctor your expected to surrender everything about yourself. They have a certain control as though they are the government of your life. I understand that I need medication, but a doctor with a personality and dare I say a soul is sometimes nice to have also. There were many difficulties that I had with this guy and I could have walked out on him a couple of times. I remember once telling him about my low energy level and my depression. He said, "You're not depressed. Your lazy." That really lifted my spirits. There is a lot to be learned in the mental health profession. Some psychiatrics like to look down upon their patients as simpletons that can't live without them. They forget about the human aspect of the doctor patient relationship in a realm of psychological mind games. Needless to say he was not a genuine person. On the other hand, the therapist that he referred me to had some qualities that I came to trust.

She was about my mother's age. I was intuitively drawn to her as someone that could put me back together. I wasn't able to confide in my mother. She had warned me not to get involved in such a confusing situation with a young woman whose games my mother knew well. If anything she was going to be there to tell me she told me so. So a mother figure away from home appealed to me. I still proceeded to open up with caution as I established trust. I hadn't much experience with people and no means of expressing myself in common communication. I wasn't one to waste time with small talk or beat around the bush at the tea party of my unusually large hat.

Usually I established trust with someone by expressing my vision and I knew that women were more open to the core of creativity. After all, creative thought comes from that which is feminine in a man. And that was how I found out what was also inside of someone else in his or her ability to comprehend something so complex. It always seemed to bring together a magic of unearthly connections between myself and whomever I revealed it to. To reveal the spinning wheel to someone excited his or her own imagination. I could trust them to know that I had an intricate and sensitive mind that needed to be handled with a delicate nature. In a sudden discharge of creative thought I decided to tell her about the vision in one of our sessions. I was so glorious and eccentric in great detail as to adorn the air with an ethereal aroma. "You're touched with fire!" She exclaimed as she referred me to a book that had just recently been published.

I left her session with a feeling of grandeur as I made my way to the bookstore. There I was touched with fire and suddenly the mysteries that yearned in the burning wheels of cosmic order were going to be revealed to me at last. The meaning of life and the elixir to my own madness were to be found in a book that was written for no one but me. God christened me. He smiled down upon me with the Eucharist of an eternal flame burning the tissues of my tongue. I need only speak of the vision to bring upon the art of happening. As was the way I made miracles. But after reading the book I came in contact with a frightening reality. *Touched With Fire* was about the manic-depressive illness and the correlation between madness and

creative thought. It was more sobering than anything else. Not an uplifting journey to make with words. I was very flattered that she thought me so brilliantly mad, placing me in the same caliber of the damned that walk the dead of this disease in the miracles of language. It struck me to have been thought a genius by this woman that believed I could carve the currents of air with the ravishing muscle of my tongue into phoenixes of whispering wind. There were writers upon writers that wrote with the accelerated divinity of a dancing dementia that they harbored in the beauty of bipolar. I was among the ranks of Dr Frankenstein and capable of my creations coming to life with a spark that set fire to the forests of my own delight. But seriously the minds within this book held great insight into the tight rope of sorts that genius's walk with the fire of lunacy when they wield the wizardry of the word. There is a cartoon in one of my philosophy books. On one side of the frame is a poet contemplating the realm of language and words. On the other side of the cartoon is a madman in a straightjacket doing the same thing. There is a very fine line between the two of them and *Touched with Fire* did well to offer a light on the subject. For me at least. But unfortunately I was not excited to read about someone that died furiously insane and countless others that only ended up committing suicide. I understand that medications were not available to these people, but the book offered me little hope for the fine line that I was going to have to walk the rest of my life. It established no philosophy of salvation for us of the bizarre in our brains and madness seemed damnation upon every

turn in the road of this reckless roller coaster. Was I going to think myself into a corner of craziness? Was I going to foam at the mouth and walk the streets naked in my old age? Was I even going to live long enough to go mad? There were so many questions and the queries themselves were enough to sink me in the sand of insanity. Sure, I was touched with a maddening gift. And somehow I needed to find a way to make that work in my favor before I succumbed to the absurd. He had been the master of so many before me and I had a fight greater than I could bear in the symmetry of my soul and the balance of my brain.

I remember bringing some of my art in for her to see. "Are you going to remember the little people?" she asked. Everyone was so certain that I was going to one-day walk among the clouds and great the gods with the fire of my mind. I could definitely imagine it as I had a power of mind that could dance its way into the doorway of an eternal bliss. But was it plausible? Perhaps there was to come a time in life when I was willing to work towards redemption and my suffering would lead me to a greater position upon the snow-white wings of doves. But the secular success that everyone saw in me was one that guided me to build my hopes in the nonsense of nothing as that was the wealth to be had in material madness. Hope was too dangerous a thing to waste on what wasn't in a spiritual salvation. At the time I hadn't the hope I once did in life even for the sake of beautifying my inner world. I was engrossed in my misery and never imagined my worth of anything to myself as I had been declining in

the decay of my disease of desolation. And my illness was a rather lonely one that kept me from the simple connections others knew with each other. Even the simple hellos and good-byes were an excruciating process that I hadn't quite learned in life. I hadn't the know how in human relations to climb any ladder of success in the working world. I remember our sessions were filled with my frustrations of life and I had been so sorrowed in the unfair circumstances of my fate to dangle in the purgatory of dead people. I might have been touched with fire, but the flame had burned its way out in the anguish of banging my head against the bricks of this new life I certainty hated.

I began to know life in its boredom of elders that complained about the government and crafted the art of bullshit. I got together every Tuesday with my grandfather and a friend of his that was also a computer hobbyist. We used to spend the day on my grandfather's computer. They always found a way to screw something up. Whether it was delete a program or even delete Windows, I was always the voice of reason as odd as that sounds. It was my job to fix the messes they left behind. They both looked to me for answers, and they had this impression of me as being smart. But I never felt smart. Most of my life I had been conditioned to feel mentally defective as though I should be thrown away. No matter how much someone stroked my ego I never could acknowledge my own intellect. I've let people read this book who have said that I'm brilliant. And I have even been considered by some to be a genius. This praise has even

come from others who themselves are gifted. But I've had a hard time seeing it. I don't know if writers are allowed to voice a moment of weakness in their abilities to bring forth the written word with confidence. But this book is a light on every aspect of my personality and it is only fair that I allow the reader into the insecurities that are involved in writing a book and assessing my own intelligence. No matter how intelligent I may come to believe I am I know there is always someone out there that is going to make me appear foolish either directly or indirectly. Because I can write this book is more a measure of emotional strength than it is intellect. I'm more appreciative of the people who understand the courage it takes to write all of this. There are some that have speculated that emotional quotient is the true test of intelligence. My writing simply proves that I have the will power to think things through and solve problems clearly with a creative flare. I can't say that I am touched with the fire of genius in the world of words as the great masters in much of literature are. I wish I were, but its silly to think myself so gifted in a medium of expression that I walk about in virgin snow. I can play with language because it can be such a festivity in the many combinations that are creative in shaping the same pieces in their exact positions. But I can't imagine that I write with a pen that is poetic in parallel to the elaborate work of an Einstein. Such a vast mastery of that which holds the elegance of a fire upon the philosophy of any expression is not of my own capacity. The ever expansion of the brain's ability to solve itself within the delicate grace of its

universe is not quite of my own potential in any of my mediums. And it is that which I hold in personal opinion as classifying the mind of unalloyed genius. There seem to be many forms of precocity that stand about in various coliseums of expression. All of which are within the capacity of the human race to breakthrough the barriers of mediocrity. Be it even in the form of a comedy, which can leap beyond the boundaries of the mind into the heart of madness where we wonder what is going through the mind of someone like Andy Coffmin. But to imagine that I am one that can bring the world something ahead of its time, as a traveler from the future is not entirely plausible in my own abilities at any stage in my development. I'm aware of my gifts, but have I been to the afterward and back in the doorway between the rooms of madness and genius? I sometimes fear that I have and often wish that I hadn't. And perhaps I've delved too deeply in the disaster of such an afterward. I think often of many philosophers that have given their entire lives to the pursuit of truth. And I imagine how they have walked with the possibility of never arriving at that solid mass of sanity in the madness of the depths that can consume them into the obliteration of reality for their entire earthly journey. The devotion to a study of oneself in the examination of life must come to a completion at any cost. And in me there is a unique philosophy of my own experiences, of which I weave in the potency of my own imagination in its rudimental form. And it is an aptitude more powerful than knowledge. It is by imagination that I gather the segments of experience in the organization of these

peculiar characters that signature themselves in the layered rings of my mind. But to be a mind of wizardry in the stain glass divinity of impeccability upon the moving mountains of my words is outlandish in the lion's den of the critics. I remember reading about Poe and how he was thought of as a brilliant mind that had not yet reached puberty. And I remember how insulting a comment it was as though he still played with toys. I can hardly write with a caliber of his, which lessons my confidence even more. But intelligence as it is a tangible object that can be seen to flow from our expressions leaves me pondering the corresponding relation of playing with toys. Of course the difference is fact and fiction and the serious nature of this book is impossible for me to forget in the burdens it has brought upon me. But still at times I feel the prodigy dwelling in me, as I was when I was a child. That monumental status still sits atop the dresser of my psyche as I look out towards the wall of a creative reality in my words. To this day I still don't know if I was deserving of the fame that echoed through the small community of my childhood. But as I was as a child and as I continue to dream of the impractical I've had a very hard time overcoming that perception of my own intelligence as still radiating in a state of virginal youth. The clusters of the mind and the schematization of the psyche in the language of my own words are merely things that I arrange in a game of chess with myself. I'm not foremost a writer and I picked this up as a fancy of mine in my salivating tongue to taste as many flavors of expression in my life as a simple matter of mapping reality. I am very conscious that I am

still of a young age where my style is continually in the process of maturing. This is an intensive world of experimentation that I'm not even sure I belong in. In writing this book and dealing with language I feel like someone who has been abducted into a mother ship of alien instruments. I've expected of myself to navigate the mandala of my psyche before I once again return to earth. I was honored to be considered so ravishingly mad as a creative genius by someone that studied psychology. But honestly she had stricken me with a societal status that I didn't necessarily want. All I often ever wanted was a normal personality that wore gray and blended in with the background. I admit that I have a tendency to sway towards a creative madness and even a not so creative one. I don't question that I am in fact touched with something bizarre in my brain and I know it to be painfully true in the curse that it can be. But do I write with a sophistication that parallels the gift of fire that I know in my mind? It is hard for me to judge objectively. Anyone can write about madness, but to do so with the flow of finesse is a painstaking endeavor that applauds the terror of death. This has not been an easy task and at times a prison that sucks me into many dangerous games that I play with my own mind. My words move the mechanisms of my own emotions so gracefully in an exquisite trajectory as I speak them to myself. But what do they move of others? Writing is in many ways like art and they both mirror each other with the reproductive organs of creativity. The inspirations that guide me in images are the same that multiply my mind in words. I know I come in the youth of an age

that is still developing as not being influential enough in wisdom. But as an artist I feel a great emptiness that I may never have the ability to revolutionize an archetypal style. Even within my experimentation I've always been influenced by the mastery of others and especially the surrealizations of artists such as Salvador Dali. In the arena of my art I feel that my talents will never have the potential to insight a riot in the art world, as did Pollock. But does that mean that as an artist I should not create? When I was in college I did the ebony pencil drawing that mirrored the style of M.C. Echer. My teacher told me that in reflecting someone else's work they became my competition. I've always felt a great need to establish myself as a model that others competed against. I've always felt an undue amount of pressure as wanting to become a known participant of the art world to establish myself as a Platonic form. It's just like any other rat race and the competition of evolving a style undermines the founding principles of creating for the joy of healing. I believe that my writing has come to parallel my art in meaning, but be it not the craft of a literary revolt should I not write? The adherence to the passion of perfection is difficult to maintain in the blemishes that handicap the mind's potential for breakthrough. But the therapy of creation should be breakthrough enough. Especially when that creation is a romp through reality. If there is a blessing it is in the hunger and desire to be expressive in an open and sincere manner that delves into the machinery of my mind and that which it has experienced of my external life. That is where the fire touches me in the feverish attempt

to round my life into an order of accelerating sanity. When I was hospitalized as a child there was a man there who took special interest in me. We used to play field hockey in the gymnasium of the hospital. There was one occasion when he became upset with me for some reason that I didn't understand. I was always intense in my participation of sports. He insisted that I go one on one with him and try to score a goal as everyone else proceeded to stand on the sidelines. I became overly conscious of the situation and very lethargic as I humbled before the challenge. "You don't want it bad it enough!" he shouted as everyone watched me in my defeat. I lowered my head, walked to the bleachers and sat down without even trying. But I never forgot it. And now unfortunately I want it so bad that I can taste the gushing blood of existence in the jaws of language. Whether that taste is subjective only to me the fire that isn't seen is in the coping mechanisms that handle the intensity of my mind. Within my psyche and revolving around its heart has developed a whirlpool of words that arrange reality from the raw meat of my own being, which I have devoured in a banquet of gluttony. If not only for the sake of feeding my soul.

Which brings me to assess the rest of my life. It is a task to conquer the fiends of fire that torch the turbulence of my journey. And they have arrived on many occasion to stunt the work of my inner struggle. I've longed for nothing but peace in my completion upon my path in words. This is to endure a test of manhood to the likes of which I have never known. And it is to prove myself worthy

of an ethereal kingdom. At this time in my life I hadn't the will I needed to be in prayer and ask for strength. I wasn't one to pray as I am now and never knew the power of prayer until I needed it to survive. When I was about twenty-two I ended up returning to school. I faced the fierce hatred of the system in its false presentation of enlightenment and direction. I hadn't an idea of what to expect, but my experiences with education throughout my life were disappointing to say the least. I didn't know if I was ready or prepared to enter the lion's mouth with the sacrifice of my head. I didn't have a choice in the matter. My fears were always ready to be brought to the surface as Satan spoke to me with many voices. There truly was something utterly evil out there and it ran wild in this world while it showed its teeth to me from time to time. I had to go back to school to stay under my father's medical coverage and it was a situation that society in its ideal design decided to subject me to. I wasn't strong enough to carry my character with confidence. Because of my illness I had been brought to the bottom in the dizzy of a depression that was worsening each day. There was no safe haven when I was feeling ill. I was a bruised and somewhat beaten man. I knew it was going to be painful for me to embark on the ladder of learning again. I hadn't hands or feet fast enough to climb with everyone else. Common sense told me I was in for a very rough time. I had a wound in my eyes and I couldn't see the steps to climb the process of maturation. My disability drowned me in cessation. Because of my financial situation my only choice was the Community College. There were three

campuses throughout the state. I decided to go to a different one than I had previously attended thinking that no one would know me there.

Going back I decided to concentrate my studies on the intellectual aspect of the fine arts degree. I had ventured enough into creation and the visual stimulation and mysteries of my right brain. It was time to educate my left brain and take off where the computer had initiated my rational thought. I was able to write very imaginatively, but the ability of my mind to think through complicated problems with language and especially my own inner voice was very weak. I was intuitive and creative, but not an elaborate thinker. The capability to explore this side of my brain was hindered by many obstacles of my illness. I had difficulty concentrating especially when it came to reading. My brain needed a strong workout and all that was required to unleash the potential within me was the power of my will.

Unfortunately I was going to receive a workout in the den of demons. Before attending school I decided to wear a medical necklace because I was deathly afraid of having a seizure in class again. The fear of being harassed by a teacher was enough to precipitate the anxiety that was going to cause a seizure. I wasn't going into the situation of my own accord, which was enough to make me dread it. All I could remember was the last time I sat in a class and how painful that was for me. This time I was forced to eat peas. They tasted of death in the vegetation of dark hearts that run ramped across the land of this senseless system.

On the first day, as I walked into the school, three students passed me. One of them said, "I would like to pulverize that kid!" It wasn't the welcome I was hoping for. Something had to be dreadfully wrong with me as a human being. It was hard for me not to imagine that those were the sentiments of every student I was to come across. I was socially awkward to the point of attracting hatred. It never mattered to anyone that I had a beautiful and creative mind. People saw a geek in a world where all that mattered were the personas and cliques of being among the popular. My ego in terms of personality was very humble and weak. In some places you need a strong character to survive and I didn't have one. The mentality of high school stays with some people for the rest of their lives. And sadly it even goes so far as to stay with some professors. Just as in the politics of the knife shows I found myself in a continuation of the peer persecution that high school has always been so famous for. Every world I entered into became a microcosm of society. Yet even in the dungeons of despair I sought out the matrix. There had to be a mind behind this facade that could offer me the intercourse of enlightenment. Someone that could make this underground lair of a learning institute worth my time and effort.

When I started classes everyone avoided me and so I avoided everyone. The necklace that I wore detoured people from wanting to know me. I was hoping that the teachers were going to give me some leeway. That didn't happen. Most of them didn't want me in their class. They took it as a sign that I was watching their behavior and

looking for a lawsuit. When I picked up on this I stopped wearing it. The anxiety didn't go away, but I began to feel fairly comfortable that I wasn't going to seizure because I wasn't in a situation where they could get right in my face and lecture me. Although there were a couple of teachers that had a burning desire to do so.

They knew they had me in a situation that I could not escape. In one class I sat in the last row in the left-hand corner of the room. It was on the top floor and in back of me was a large window. My teacher often walked to where I was sitting and made comments. One time he looked out the window and said, "It's a long way down there, it would be a shame if you fell." He talked constantly about child molesters and how he wanted to see them all rot in hell. "Who would want to be friends with a loser like that," he said. Everyone in the class just laughed. I tried to laugh along with the others, but felt uneasy. After all, I was suspect for liking little boys. I have gone so many places in life where it is politically correct to express hatred and even homicidal thoughts towards another human being that most likely didn't stand in line and ask to be the way he or she is. I take a very unpopular stand on this issue. I think it is a horrible crime for someone to give in to their sexual impulses and molest a child. And something like that requires a lifelong dedication of repentance in order to remain true to a Creator. But because of the suspect thoughts people had about me I was never able to feel the same hatred. I think hypocrites are more deserving of hell. And I don't need someone telling me whom I should or should not hate. I firmly believe that

even the most wretched members of society have a right to seek redemption in the eyes of God. What is this life for if we do not have the opportunity to regain access to the inner self of our hearts, as we were when we were born? This teacher didn't believe in anything but his own unjust punishment of my character. The comments continued in this class. One time he walked passed where I was sitting and said, "Yeah, I would like to go home alive tonight too." He often closed the curtains in the class and repeatedly said, "I wouldn't want one of my students to go blind." This guy was a real winner and he thought he was hip too. He wore his shirt unbuttoned with a gold chain. You could tell he was a real intellectual that had unbounded wisdom to offer in enlightened intercourse.

My English teacher thought he was God's gift to the world of words. After his first lecture he granted us immortality as if he was the Supreme deity of literature. It was a pleasant offer at first and I didn't think him such an asshole until he actually began with his lectures as though court was in session. He was in his late forties and professed his love of Pink Floyd and anything else he could think of to hold on to his youth and make it appear to everyone in the class that he was the coolest character you could ever meet. He repeatedly quoted Dylan saying, "When you've got nothing you've got nothing to lose." During one class he made up a story about a clown that molested a young girl. I sat close to the front row, and as he was talking he made a point to stand in front of me and say, "He was a tall clown." Being 6'3" everyone in the class immediately knew he was

making an analogy that referenced me. He even looked dead in my eyes when he said it. I didn't take that well. Nor did I any of his lectures. I kept getting a strange feeling that he was building his lectures around information that he gathered about me from my assignments. In the beginning of the semester he had us fill out 3 x 5 cards giving personal info about ourselves. On my card I put that I didn't have a sense of humor. At the time I didn't. The first card that he bothered to look at was mine. He collected the other student's cards without even glancing at them. Of course he had to build one of his lectures around this. "The worst thing that you can tell someone is that you don't have a sense of humor," he said. He began digging into my head with what were not really lessons in writing as much as they were sermons that he felt justified in preaching about why I should be bearing the unbearable with a smile. He gave us assignments on ethics and we were to reverberate the morals that he was teaching as if he was a priest. The only ethics I learned from this man was that you could still harass someone within the law if you cleverly word your arguments to make them appear as though they actually related to the course. I took an English class to learn to write. Instead I was being taught to grin and bear the worst that he could come up with. I was assigned to write of and expose every weakness and fear that I had in life. He insisted not to use rhetorical questions, as we would only answer them later. Did I actually need to listen to this man? Where do these people get their degrees? I often felt as though I was being taught on the street. It just so happened that he also taught at the art

college where I was mistreated. I had to keep my mouth shut and let him delve inside my head with assignments that required revealing personal information about my beliefs and intimate feelings of life. And after all who was I? I was the campus idiot. I was to be treated as such. No one was going to defend me or even believe me if I brought an accusation against one of these teachers. Towards the end of the semester he said, "When you decide you want to stop being a victim then go to the library." As if he was justified in making an example of me because my database of knowledge in the literary sense was weak and I was not in a position to defend myself intelligently. These people choose the weakest links and bump those of us too defenseless off in a natural selection that suits their personal amusement in the circus of their class. School was always an insane asylum of mad scientists that practiced their witchcraft on me. There had to be someone in this world that hadn't the thick tar of hatred in his or her heart.

It was around this time that I had a full-blown psychotic episode. I hadn't slept in about four days. I felt like I needed to stay awake to remain in control of my environment. It's hard to explain. In the movie *The Invasion of The Body Snatchers* whenever someone fell asleep they were replaced by a replica of themselves that had developed in a pod. The main character struggled throughout the movie not to fall victim to the night as he watched everyone around him become replaced. I felt that if I were to fall asleep my mind would somehow reset. I was becoming delusional. The world had

betrayed me again and there was nothing I could do about it. I was a mentally ill individual that was being cleverly led off of the road of life by people that were being paid to teach me. But their attitude was that I should put a gun to my head. I had a very hard time in life understanding what it was that I did that I deserved to be treated this way. It wasn't fair and I was unjustly persecuted to a point that made every breath unbearable to take. Because of such treatment I was to labor endlessly over every mistake no matter how insignificant or irrelevant and never find the ability to forgive myself. I was a leper in life and I longed for Christ to lay his hands upon me. But the darkness was so drudging I had lost the heart to seek a savior. This is what the mentally ill must endure, not simply within their own minds, but in the minds of others as they are branded the outcasts of society. Its painful enough to live with weaknesses, but by being weak we are shown even harder times than those that are strong. It is a great injustice in this world. I was in a school of about a thousand students. But I seemed to be the only one there getting a different kind of education. I was being taught how worthless I was to society. And the students followed in suit with the teachers because they were such versatile characters with charisma and charm. I had a strong sense that they were afraid of me so they felt the need to put me on trial. I never did anything to justify those fears. I dearly missed having someone in my life that understood. My therapist was someone that I still had trouble expressing myself to. I didn't know how to articulate the difficulties that I was having in school. And frankly I believed

that anyone I talked to was going to convince me that I suffered from extreme paranoia. I did suffer from paranoia. I was often worried that someone at school was going to make an attempt on my life. But the fears that I felt were based in the reality of the situations that I was presented with at school. The agony of being alone came at me like a freight train of pure hatred. As was the common consensus at school, "No one wants to be friends with a loser like that." I was made out to be someone that I wasn't. And so I questioned the popular opinion until my own integrity began to fade and submit to the eyes of my enemies. And soon everyone became an enemy.

During this time I was also in the beginnings of my philosophy class. I was required to use logical thought to a degree that was more intense than I had anticipated it was going to be. I was also trying to formulate a theory of God's existence with logical thought. I had imagined that this could be done. Anyone that has ever taken on such a task to organize a sound conception of a creator with linguistic tools will agree that it is a process that can not be stopped until a conclusion is reached. It can be a lifelong obsession and a purpose that makes life worth the journey. If the task never comes to find God the soul is left to wander in the halls of uncertainty with doors that thought has never ventured to open. My brain was not accustomed to the long hours of rational thought it took to comprehend and evolve upon the concepts of the early philosophers. I had to work in a theory of my vision with other philosophical thought. As time went on the weight of philosophy began to integrate itself with my situation at

school making it a profound episode of existential dread. I was being held on trial for my character while I tried to reason my own existence into a meaningful performance of metaphysical salvation. The delusions multiplied and I felt the madness that had been so clearly described in *Touched with Fire* beginning to brew in the echoes of my thoughts. I felt it before, but this time I was using a part of my brain that wrapped myself in compulsive and obsessive thoughts to the likes of which I had never known. The reoccurrence of thought simulated a reality of mind. In my philosophy book there was a story of a man who looked over the rails of a bridge and suddenly was struck with the thought to jump. Without reason for jumping the thought itself did not relinquish and he became trapped in the possibility of jumping. I came to believe my thoughts as real occurrences and I had to continue to remain alert so that I could think them through. As is known thoughts are real as they have physical effects on the body and continue to build upon eachother to exaggerate these effects even more. Fall asleep and I'd lose everything that I struggled so hard to construct in my mind. I was building a sandcastle of the way I thought the real world to be. And I was looking over the rail of that bridge. I had discovered the tragedies of thought as I was working out my brain in a way that I had never done before. The dualistic nature of thinking was turning its wheels over and over in my mind. I was searching out the true nature of reality that appeared to me in vision through reason. And with the same intellect I was trying to uncover the reality of societal situation. They began to contradict

each other. The brilliance of my vision given to me in the hope of assessing a great cosmic order was not in tune with the disorder of life's lessons that I was learning. I didn't understand why I had this vision if my life continued to lead me into prisons of misery. The uncertainty of my path in life fractured the integrity of the ideal reality I had always imagined to exist beyond this world. I knew the philosophy course was the one haven of uncovering the truth that had been disguised to me in the shadows. It was surrounded by a frightening world that I had no control over. So I struggled to remain awake as I tried to differentiate the shadows. Sleep was going to destroy that sandcastle and I'd have lost the illusion of control. The irony of the control was that by trying to maintain it I was watching it slip away. My will was being tested beyond its capabilities.

I struggled to continue without sleep. My thoughts become more and more irrational but the illusion of control made even the irrational seem logical. I couldn't make my family understand. I could never turn to them with questions about my identity or the misfortunate perceptions that others had of me. And besides, how do you explain to someone that you lost sight of the truth? How do you explain that the path you have taken has led you into a wall without any doors? How do you turn to someone and reveal to them that in your thinking you have fallen into existence as a monstrous puzzle that you can not put together without their help? My family consisted entirely of Christians. None of them were knowledgeable enough to help me with the pieces of heady concepts that were conjured by the great

maestros of the mind. And if you weren't a Christian in my household there was something wrong with you. You were an abnormality of demonic convictions that didn't make sense to anyone, or so I imagined at the moment that this episode began to build. It's so frightening to relive it in reflection never mind having lived it once. I had to be the unholy brainchild of the paranormal. I came to believe that my family was envious of my power and so they sought to destroy me. I started to build theories about my family. I was always the odd one out. I wasn't pure in my submission to the dogmas of the Catholic religion. My illness was the product of an evil that I had opened myself up to. I imagined that through my father's eyes I was an immoral sinner that dabbled in the occult. In my mind my family became that part of the Catholic Church that revels in the wrath of the Old Testament. I felt my ability to think for myself and explore alien thoughts contradictory to the beliefs of the church made me inherently corrupt. I had grown up with the dominance of religious beliefs instilled in me. Looking back I don't really think anyone cared what I sought out to find in my own beliefs so long as I found them and they brought me peace. It was to take a long time to find that serenity in my soul once again. But during this one episode I came to believe that I was fighting a great persecution as if they were using religion as a form of mind control.

I sensed that my brothers had a vendetta against me. It was irrational to a point of pulling me to pieces. I became convinced that my father embraced religion in order to belittle me with damnation.

And one of my brothers was using mind control in the form of movies and television shows to get me to surrender to the dominance of his personality. He was trying to show me the power of his intellect in comparison to my own. I was sure of it. The control that I had been securing in the world of my own thoughts was falling apart without me even knowing. The more time went on, and the more irrational my thinking became simply suggested to me that reality was in fact and always has been a surreal landscape that I was now becoming aware of for the first time. It never occurred to me that I was actually delusional. It's hard to explain. I imagined that I always lived my life with my eyes closed. That is my life in regards to social situations and the perception of myself as I appeared to others. The floodgates of societal comprehension were now open and a psychic battle began.

I remember walking down stairs and on the work bench was a clipping from the newspaper. It was of the students who were arrested for burning down the high school. Suddenly flood gates opened. Irrational fears about the past began to build. Weird associations began to develop. A psychic connection began to build as I formed illogical conclusions based on the image. "Yes!" I thought. "I am being accused!" I always worried about the next accusation and where it was going to come from. My brother put that there purposely to antagonize my imagination. Just to give me a taste of his power. Or at least that was what I thought as I lived in a world of witchcraft and wizardry that was organized against me. The strain

of school and the necessity to use my mind in a way I had never before used it was burning me out into a shadow of my own existence.

I gave no one any clue as to what I was thinking. To mention any of my suspicions would have made me appear foolish and delusional. And at the time I believed myself to be completely sane. I'd have been exposing a weakness. I imagined them gathering together and mocking me as they won another victory. "Look at Jon - the mental patient. He'll never make it in the real world." Much of the paranoia that I formulated about my family had its base in reality. I wasn't thought much of by my brothers or by my father. I was in every respect the family member who was "special" and unable to function with people. I was considered the slow one in the family. I was mentally ill and I was a social outcast. No one in my family ever took the time to get to know me as a result of my being ill for so long. I wasn't an approachable person and never had much in common with my family members. I often came to question the love that was there and watched it dissolve in my paranoia. My grandfather was the only one who spent quality time with me. My mother was there in her own way, but never understood anything that was going on with me. My problems were so complex and convoluted that they couldn't even be comprehended by myself. At the time I felt like a stranger in my family. Those were the facts of the situation. There was a lot of reasoning in the background of my delusional thinking that brought it about. I had many labels that the average human being never bore in

their worst nightmares. As labels that came to define me to society they also defined a madness that some of us are forced to know.

My brother brought home the movie *Seven* for me to watch. I knew he was sending me a message in a bottle. I went along with his game. I hadn't slept in about four days before I watched the movie. It was sick and twisted with some religious significance about the seven deadly sins. The plot was about a serial killer that killed people based on each of the seven deadly sins. I watched the movie with an intensity trying to decipher the message that my brother was giving me. In the end of the movie the detectives take the serial killer to the place where the last of the bodies was. They arrive at a deserted area with power lines. A van appears with a package. One of the detectives intercepts the van while the other stays with the killer. The investigator finds the head of his partner's wife in the package. When his partner found out, the killer told him that he admired him. He wanted to have his life and to be with his wife. He was envious and killing her was one of the seven sins. The detective became enraged and after a fit of denial shot the killer completing the final sin. Wrath. It was a fierce moment and I took every bit of it in with a naked eye. I hadn't the common sense to close the door on what were demonic influences. By this time I was over the edge in my thinking and living on the fragments of subliminal suggestions.

About five hours passed and the movie stayed with me, especially the end of it. It was too real. It built momentum in my mind like a snowball rolling down a hill. Everything in my life including the

fabric and weight of my existence came down to the final scene in the movie. It was like one of my nightmares. I became so involved in the final moments of the movie that I was no longer thinking about it. I was living it. I felt the wrath that the man felt in the movie and struggled so desperately not to express it. I have never before felt so much rage. My veins were stemming from the fiery inferno of my mind. I remember locking myself in the bathroom. "This cant be happening!" I kept shouting. Sitting on the toilet and looking into the mirror I kept grabbing my face and pulling at my hair. Resisting the urge to lash out at my brother for bringing me the message. To me he was the killer. The movie was the head in the package. I was very angry at life and this was my final acceptance of my life as it was. There were excruciatingly painful stages that I needed to go through to accept myself as who I was to others. My mother stood outside the bathroom with my dog that was crying. She didn't know what the hell was wrong with me. I did a very good job at repressing the shit I took from people. And I took more of it than I should have and for no good reason. When was it going to end? Was I ever going to reach a place in life where I could forget I was a label? It seemed like such a hopeless struggle. Everything came pouring out of me when my mother tried to talk to me. I thank God for my mother. She was the only person in the world that I could trust to help me think through the absurd without passing judgement. She had no idea where I was coming from but was able to talk me down to the point where I was rational enough to check myself into the hospital for the second time.

When I arrived at the hospital I received some much-needed sleep. I was deeply ashamed of myself for having lost my mind. If there was an actual psychic battle going on I was certainly the loser. But it was all in my head. I had let myself get to me. The repressed anger that I had within me overflowed into one overwhelming episode. It wasn't as if I didn't have a reason to be angry. I had every reason in the world to be enraged. Who wouldn't have been? But I was troubled that it had come in the form of an eruption. The fact that I had stopped taking my meds wasn't much help either. Not to mention all the coffee I had drank and the lack of sleep. There were many factors that came into play in this incident. I know now that without my medications and without sleep I become psychotic. It was a hard lesson to learn. The eruption would not be an isolated occurrence. It was to the extreme, but occasionally I found myself struggling to deal with anger that I didn't know how to express in the right situations.

The good that came from checking into the hospital was that I received my much-needed sleep and was put back on my meds. Plus my parents became active in my health by joining a support group for families of the mentally ill. My father had a new understanding of what I was going through. And they showed compassion for the first time towards my illness. My mother told me that my father had some anxieties with the group because of facing his own depression and what often appeared to my mother as an illness that was undiagnosed. They were in the company of other people that had family members that suffered from a debilitating illness. The members of the group

shared art that their ill family members had worked on. My mother brought in the self-portraits that I did at the art institute. She told me that they moved everyone in the group. I was beginning to feel understood by my parents for the first time as they actually paid attention to my struggle.

Other than that the hospital stay was just a place to pull myself together. I didn't talk much when I went there. The scars of school left me feeling incapable of human bonding. I left sane, but was depressed about not meeting anyone that I could talk to. There were a few people I could have gotten to know. But even in the hospital I came to feel that I wasn't worth knowing. Group therapy was a joke. I remember one session I went on and on about why I had checked into the hospital. All of us were in a very small room. Not a good idea for a group of mental patients. As I was speaking a woman got out of her chair and began to pace back and forth. I could see that she was disturbed with what I was saying. I don't clearly remember what I actually was talking about. The only thing I do remember saying was, "I'm not sure that the final result is worth it." What I meant was the fear of rejection had I actually put my trust in these people. In an outburst the women shouted at the counselor that was in the room, "Do we have to listen to this?" The counselor looked at her and then at me and said, "I know, a lot of the people that come in here you probably wouldn't say hi to if you saw them on the street." I was crushed. Here I was trying to get help and I was reduced to garbage. I made a few mistakes, but I never did anything in life that required

me to be treated as the social leper that people saw me as. The hospital helped whom the hospital wanted to help.

As some of the patients got to actually know me they even went as far as to like me. There was one young woman that was anorexic and deathly thin. She was tall with long curly blond hair. She was very difficult to look at and I thought her a fallen angel from the grace of what once was her innocence in vibrant beauty. I remember sitting with her in the smoking room. It was just the two of us and I had been bruised so badly I didn't expect someone to be unguarded in their pain as she proceeded to put her heart into my hands. It seemed like ages since I knew the tongue of a woman to talk to me in sincerity. She began talking about the trauma that initiated her illness. She was opening up to me of all people. Someone that you weren't going to say hi to if you saw me on the street. She told me about her stepfather and how he had been sexually devious with her when she was young. At first I felt my own insecurities about suspicions that people had of me and she brought back a river of feelings from my adolescents. I didn't know how to comfort her and I wanted to believe that all people made mistakes in life, but that none were so wretched that they couldn't be saved. Unfortunately there are some so miserable and dead that they don't care of themselves to be redeemed. I never truly wanted to believe that there were people so heinous they couldn't see the sight of creation if it struck their heart to do so in an instant of light upon the shadows of their errors. It was the fountain of Christ flowing in me from my childhood that flooded

my path with the crosses I was to bear and were bricks in the basement even if I strayed from the house. I had touched something of Jesus in my life and as damned as the door was to be locked in lunacy I knew it was to open if I had it in my strength to solve my own salvation. She was so sickly that this was a horror hard to forgive and of a crime it required a lifetime of remorse to absolve. Further perpetuating the damnation of my self-image as someone that should be shown a difficult time for the suspicion of my sexuality. I went through unnecessary ridicule because I was week and unable to defend myself. But I couldn't keep from seeing the terrible ordeal that this man had put this young woman through. I could imagine it in all its horrific details. The result of her condition was enough to illustrate the trauma that she went through. When she finished telling me about the misery it had caused her she turned to me and asked, "Does it ever get any better?" I wanted to cry. I quickly searched for the right thing to say to try to comfort her. I was awful with words and I never knew how I was coming across. "It's a life." I said. "It has its ups and downs." Then I asked her, "Have you ever seen God?" I always sought the power of my vision to guide me through life's miseries. I always imagined it evoked the same type of hope in others. A light came upon her face as she said, "No, but I imagine that He is something so wonderful and magnificent that you cant imagine." That was were the conversation ended.

One by one everyone retired to their rooms and went to sleep. Instead of doing the same I began to draw my vision on the

chalkboard. It seemed the natural avenue of action after the discussion and every time someone brought it back in me I desired to illustrate the magic wheel if only to remind myself that there was something in this world worth living for. And that something was meant for the faucets of communication and the harmony of characters. The schematic of rings and signs translated roughly with the medium but was brilliant to anyone that could appreciate art. Even the doctors. As everyone awoke they were amazed at this design of cosmic order. The young woman that I had talked to the night before approached me and said, "I had no idea." From then on she thought me a genius. Before she left the hospital she gave me her number and a small note that read, "You have a lot to offer a woman." Unfortunately I also had a fair amount of paranoia that prohibited me from getting too close to anyone and had scars that were open to the vinegar of everyone's eyes. But of all people, someone to bow before in praise of her courage to carry on, saw me as I was in my heart. Perhaps I was one with a bouquet of beauty to shower a woman. The person that no one was going to say hi to had they seen me on the street was coerced to believe that he was damned to play that part. But in a sudden redemption of my imagination as it spoke in bursts of elegance I could walk from the gutter and become the planter of seeds and the giver of presents. At a time when I was worthless to the world and led to the junkyard of my own shattered machine I had it in me to rise from the ashes and astonish people with my creativity.

When I was transferred to the day unit I was very hesitant to talk in-group and open up about my struggles. The social phobic aspect of my illness kept setting in and left me unable to communicate in-groups. The counselor that was assigned my case kept saying, "No one here is going to judge you." I didn't take her word for it. I remember in-group someone pointed to me and said, "My friend here has been hurt so many times that he puts up a shield to keep people away." He was right. I couldn't bear to be hurt anymore. After my first attempt to open up I felt there was no point in talking to anyone about anything. I soon began to isolate when at the day hospital. Group therapy is much like high school. The dominant personalities monopolize the group while the rest of us were disregarded. At the time for me it was not a place to "get better", but rather a place that made the outside world seem tolerable. And it wasn't so much the staff as it was the other patients. I was still dealing with memories and issues that I could not confront. And most of all I was living with a stigma that exposed me as a refugee from society.

When I returned to school there were only a couple of teachers that could have cared that I was in the hospital. And my mother made them aware as she contacted the school to make sure that I could make up the work. My philosophy teacher was one of the more interesting people at school that didn't seem to fear me for having been in the hospital. He was young. Maybe five or six years older than I was. He was a gentle genius with a heart for my struggle. He was tall with wavy dark brown hair. He often wore a long overcoat

and glasses. He had a quickness to him. The kind of quickness you see in someone that has had much too much coffee. He was the most beautiful and impassioned man I had ever laid eyes on. He had a brilliant armor of such a true honor. And he offered to teach it to me in the hopes that I would one day wear it myself. So that I might take up arms against the demons that were destroying me in the sickness of the shadows. There was a fire in him that burned with the concepts of creation as they had been handed down to him by the wisdom of history. I could see this fire in his eyes as thought to him was a network of many doors that he could open at will and venture into the heart of conceptual kingdoms. When he would go over a problem I could actually see his brain processing data and arriving at the end of a maze where the answer was shining in angelic grace. He was unique and young and gifted. There was an attraction to him, both physically and mentally. He had the beauty of an Adonis in the rippling pool of reality where he labored his life for the sake of wisdom. I greatly admired him. He became a mentor to me. I told him about my hospital stay and my illness because he was inquisitive about why I wasn't in class. He approached me in the halls and actually was concerned about my welfare and whether or not I was going to have to drop the class. I told him about the problems I had with being in class and about the difficult time I sometimes had with teachers and especially the one at the art institute. He understood my situation and my awkwardness in a class setting. Instead of meeting in class he took time out of his schedule and we met in his office for

an hour every week. This was a young man that was dedicated to the pursuit of wisdom. He was someone that sought to make a bride of knowledge. From previous papers that I had done in class he was very impressed with my ability to grasp certain concepts and build upon them. He saw in me a protégé that was going to make love to the wild winds of knowledge and seek nothing but the truth in life. I developed a certain amount of trust with him that I wasn't able to do with other people. I needed the intellectual stimulation desperately. It had been so long since I discussed life and the existence of God with that young woman that had manic depression. This time I was going to do so with someone that studied the greatest minds of the world. Not only that, but someone that was stable. I needed to talk to someone of intelligence and as usual I found the matrix. I always sought out the greatest minds in the darkest depths of my life to help with pieces of my puzzle. But this time he sought out me. It was as though he saw me trying to swim in a whirlpool of philosophical thought and he was struck with a great compassion. He must have sensed an unlimited potential of growth had I the ability to organize and properly cultivate my fields of knowledge. After our first meeting I surprised him by debating with him the existence of God and challenging concepts that he was teaching me. "You're good at this," he said. "Where did you learn all of this?" he asked as I told him my religious upbringing, which as a natural process I came to question. I never told him about my vision. I was still using reason to try to solve the mystery of the occurrence. But he began to bring my

spirits back and excite my imagination to a place in time and space where I was once again mad with the miracle of life. We went over most of the history of philosophy. By the time we approached the philosophy of David Hume I grew increasingly bored with the flight of the great thinkers. I wasn't satisfied with a philosophy that couldn't prove whether or not the sun was going to rise the next morning. And especially not one that thought the mind to be a blank slate. I knew better than that and I wasn't even a genius. Throughout the entire discussions with my professor I had been anticipating Emanuel Kant.

My professor was ecstatic when I mentioned the mind like a computer and how it needs an operating system to run programs. "Have you been reading ahead?" he asked. I didn't need to read ahead to put pieces together that I had been working on since I was seventeen. He was very much into the philosophy of Emanuel Kant. "Kant revolutionized philosophy after the work of David Hume," my professor told me. He was so excited to reach this part of the studies that a fire had awakened in his eyes, which stimulated my own desires to finally know the riddles and mysteries of reality in a puzzle that was to be completed at last. This was a bizarre love triangle of flowing wisdom that was handed down through the generations and into the intellectual intercourse of our two minds.

Emmanuel Kant's philosophy was an autopsy of the body of reality to which other philosophers previous to him did not venture so deeply. The work of the ages evolved to a point of dribble with David

Hume who thought it best for philosophy to be forsaken. I felt empathy with Kant and felt the passion of his work as he tried to bring order back to existence. He did so to a point but in the end I was left yearning for more. In the heart of his philosophy he arrived at a theory of ultimate reality that somehow I had always known. He called this reality the noumenal or "thing initself." In fact the ingredients for formulating the theory are in born with everyone's own personal world. Kant was simply someone that looked deeply enough into the nature of things. But anyone could have come to the same conclusion given the right circumstances. Take any object in the world that we know. For example let us take an apple. We can see the apple with our eyes. We can smell the apple when we peel it. We can feel the smooth texture of the apple with touch. We can hear the apple as we bite into it. All we know of the apple is produced by our senses. We can not know the apple by any other means than the ones that God gave us to survive. But all the results of our perception of this item exist within our brain. We only know the apple as our brain tells us it is. In fact, we can only know of the world by our brain's construction of it. But surely the apple also exists outside of our brain. Where else would we receive our impression of the object? This thing that exists outside of our senses and outside of our brain is in a noumenal reality, or it is a thing initself. This dual nature of reality leaves us with a world that we can never know. So in effect the essence of the apple is beyond perception. Imagine if you will a seventh sense. What would it perceive? We can never know. Such a

perception would be noumenal. The part that I found to be interesting is that even I exist in a duel reality. As I perceive myself I exist as a mental construction of my own brain. This is who I have always been and always known myself to be. I am a construction of myself. But what of the person I am as I do not perceive myself? Just as the ultimate reality of the apple lies beyond that boundary of sensation I can never know myself beyond my own sensations. Somehow I am there without any perception of myself. And I know I'm there in the reality of other beings. Who themselves are impressed upon the reality of my own brain. And for each being there is a different reality. These subjective worlds are like bubbles in the ocean of the noumenal. I have existed in many different realities. I have been many different people that have been outside the boundary of my own brain. Though beings present mirrors to reveal hints of that existence they themselves are constructions within my own brain. We can only know the reality that is manufactured by the conditions and mechanics of our own minds. Did you ever know something that was not a result of you knowing it? That would violate the limit of what's possible and destroy the integrity of the noumenal. Kant also developed a theory of the mind. Unlike David Hume who thought of the mind as a blank slate Kant organized it into a shema of sorts. Giving it certain conditions under which we know and perceive. But in a tragic twist of the dissection of reality Kant placed God in the noumenal. As the creator of all things God is beyond our perceptions. We can never fathom nor comprehend this entity in the confines of

our brains. Though we can have symbols that come to represent this supreme creator they are like the apple and our perceptions of them are simply perceptions. We can never know the other side of these symbols outside of our brain. We can believe in a divine order and that all things were created by the hands of the good. But we can do nothing else but believe. Because the concept of the noumenal is derived through reason and not experience its in question whether it even exists. It comes to be the boundary of existence. So when someone tells you that the imagination has no limits they are wrong. Within the imagination are infinite possibilities. But the infinite nature of all things we know or imagine to be are themselves a bubble in the noumenal. Remember, we can not imagine a seventh sense. Along with God Kant placed freedom and immortality in the other side of all things possible as things that can never be known. We know not the meaning of immortality and can never grasp the concept as finite beings. We can have a taste of freedom as we leave a condition of reality. But the fact that we are always bound by other conditions of reality rules out ever knowing freedom in the purest sense. In the face of the noumenal there did not even exist a distinction between right and wrong. But even in the greatest depths of a certain absurdity we need to believe in order for life to mean anything. Bringing these things to life in a world that we can know meant having faith that they do exist. The meaning of life was left in the fragile hands of clouds and fairy tales. What good was belief in the overwhelming thunder of certainty? I greatly admired Kant for

his depth. He reached down into the guts of his own gray matter. But I was greatly saddened by the results of his work because I wasn't able to find a way to dispute it. I went into that class thinking I could formulate a theory of God's existence through reason. I was wrong. I suppose it was foolish of me to think so. I didn't know how to incorporate the science of my vision into this philosophy. The only way I knew it to be applicable was as the composition of my own mind. Of all the philosophers that I studied in this class Plato had been the most delightful and inspirational. Yet when I arrived at the labor of Kant it seemed to me that even Plato's sun of forms that I originally held to be the written proof of the existence of my own vision as a entity of creation was no more than a theory of mind. And according to Kant it was all going to slip into the abyss of unknowing. Descartes established a distinction between mind and brain but what possible means was there for one to exist without the other? I left knowing that my existence was a meaningless waste of time and space that one day was going to leave me stripped of my senses. Someday I was going to vanish into the oblivion of myself. I was stimulated with a divine madness in the study of this philosophy. But I wasn't yet satisfied with what I thought to be a philosophy of insanity waiting for the promise of belief to fool the world into salvation. There had to be someone who built upon this who offered a better chance or at least a hint of certainty that was going to give me a reason to believe in something greater than myself. This was

certainly a very large piece of the puzzle that presented me with a problem that I needed to think myself out of.

I didn't gather any of this from Kant's work itself. His writings were over my head in technical terms. Ninety percent of what I understood about Kant's philosophy came from my conversations with my professor. He happened to be a genius at putting things into laymen's terms for me. I wanted to get right down to the nuts and bolts of reality. And I did that despite the discontent of my findings. Though I did greatly enjoy having someone with whom I could push my conversations to the edge of what can be known. He was one of only two people in my life that discussed with me the nature of reality on a level that I found to be stimulating. Was I a woman I might have seduced him and bore his children. He is a great asset to society. He inspired me so that I thought to build a kingdom of my own philosophy. And once again felt the hunger and desire to create.

I knew that a bond had developed between us as he offered to correspond with me over the summer. We were going to study more of Kant's philosophy over the Internet. I thought it would be good to stay in contact with him and was more than happy that he offered. This was a mind that I had never before encountered. He was a true hero to a young man like myself as I had been lost in the pitfalls of reason.

At the time I was moving back in with my parents. My grandfathers control issues were stifling my life. I couldn't go to the bathroom with out him being there to see what I was doing. I needed

more freedom than that. And as much as I hated living with my parents I actually had more freedom living with them. And they had a better understanding of the difficulties I faced with my illness so I felt more comfortable with the living arrangements. I knew that they were going to allow me my privacy. My grandfather's constant scrutiny would not allow me to grow. But it was actually for the better that he did keep a close watch on my life. However, being young and still very immature I needed to explore life a little more, whatever the consequences, even though I seemed to have a tendency for treading across the quick sand of trouble. In the process of moving I lost my instructors number. I didn't find it until maybe about a month later. By then it was too late. I called him and his mother answered and I left a message, but never heard from him again. Not wanting to be a pain in the ass I never called again. From what he told me last he was moving on to another campus and I never saw him again. He was a true Socrates that would have died for his philosophy. I felt privileged enough that he spent time with me and helped me through the class. The correspondence just wasn't meant to be. I had more of life's lessons to learn. But to this man I owe so much. My grandfather was the first person in my life to teach me to think things through. But the advancement of my rational into the involvement of alchemy upon the trajectories of my own evolution I owe entirely to this man. The place he forged within my psyche was going to come to life one-day in the words of my journey. Upon the epiphanies of my soul I would try against the demons of death to

emulate my mentor. If only to touch upon his seeds as I watch them grow in the greater good of my own salvation.

With the change of address came a new beginning for me. Well, it wasn't much of a beginning. It was more like the beginning of the end. I had settled in my parent's basement after building a small room that was comfortable enough for one person. I never listened to the people in group therapy that said, "Whatever you do, don't go in the basement!" Once settled I settled into old habits. Despite my illness and my skull fracture and despite the fact that every time I did drugs I became paranoid and delusional I continued to do them from time to time. I had found a professor that motivated me towards a greater good. Yet I hadn't the wisdom to know how to wield his teachings into the armor that I so hoped to wear. When the next semester rolled around school drifted back into a Hades of not belonging. That greater good took the form of a monstrous mountain that left me in a panic of how I was going to approach it. I had time over the summer to fall victim to the loneliness and isolation that my newfound wisdom had created. I was caught in a quandary of what to do with this philosophy and never encountered another mind that had the ability to grasp the concepts. I often tried to talk to my mother. The only thing she could say was, "It must be very lonely not having someone that understands you on your level." I was too heady for her. I was desperate for companionship that was going to walk with me on the spiritual and intellectual road to redemption. But in immaturity it is often that foolish flare of personality that finds you

walking alone. And my so-called intellect was comprised of one part knowledge and another part stupidity. I was a brilliantly mad scientist with the emotional IQ of a twelve-year-old. Though my mind was at times bubbling with the radiance of imaginative thought I needed an emotional workout in order to make use of my ability to think through to the heart of reality. At this time in my life I so senselessly imagined there was nothing left to learn. I had reached the limit of what could be known in the noumenal and there was no digging deeper. The only thing I thought fit to do was self medicate the loneliness that I felt without the warm embrace of making my vision sensible and having someone to share it with. And the worst of life was always that I hadn't a companion to be my guide unto my own heart where I could touch upon the joy of communication in creativity.

Marijuana used to bring me to a state of subconscious bliss, but not any longer. It used to be such a forth of July in the blazing beauty of perception. I never wanted to let that go. But the world around me had changed so drastically and so did the way I thought about it. I was in a deeper state of consciousness than I had ever been before. And I was mad with recapturing the pleasures of sensation. I wanted to bring my mind to the forefront of existence. Drugs made me feel alive. The psychical and deep attraction to the original innocence of my substance abuse had been my reminder of the grail that I could gain if I made my way back to the castle. But I took the wrong routes. I was in a frantic inferno to kiss bliss in one moment of concentrated

creativity. I longed to harness the animation of life where upon the fear of death was a ghost that could be exercised. But I always ended up sticking my finger in a light socket and I wasn't going to learn until I saw myself in a savage battle of war with that ghost. I became delusional when I smoked. I could no longer tell what was actually going on. I couldn't separate my imagination from things that were truly happening. I had the misguided impression that I could only see when doing drugs.

Conspiracies started to form everywhere I turned. Everyone was in on it and I was being kept in the dark about everything. I could no longer keep up with my imagination. Thoughts would fly by and before I could stop them and test their validity a new set of thoughts would come into my mind. They bombarded me like tidal waves and took off in wild directions. It was free association, but I was at their mercy. I had no control of what entered my mind and no way to tell if it was real or not. When the drug wore off the thoughts subsided. I'd have to go back and try to rethink everything that passed through my mind. Sort fantasy from fact. The scariest part was when my thoughts would race in every direction when I wasn't getting high. It was almost like a puzzle that harbored the pieces of my mind in disarray. It was a maze of dreams, memories, and future predictions, interwoven with nightmarish fantasies. Every time I smoked this puzzle began to disintegrate. I was left with a void of thought. Through this void pieces would pass. It was up to me to put the pieces back in place and fill the void. Things often got very

confusing. I played with my psyche in dangerous attempts to bring harmony to my mind. It was to take something too terrifying to finally learn.

Another interesting effect that pot began to have on me was that I began to believe I was Christ reincarnated. I internalized religious symbolism with the development of my personality. But the features of my psyche were being directed towards decay. Each time I smoked seemed to be a preparation for the crucifixion. I often walked as I smoked. Carrying my cross of mental confusion and disorientation. Death presented itself to me in many forms of my imagination. I had always been in a position in life where I felt as though I was being persecuted and as though death was stalking me. I always awaited the final setup; be it the Mafia or the FBI or some other organization that played upon the fears of my imagination. When I smoked this oppression grew to alarming levels of injustice. The anxiety became unbearable. I was cultivating quite a complex in order to cope with my drug abuse. My psyche created a simple coping mechanism. Experiences that disagreed with the chemistry of my brain and wreaked havoc on my central nervous system were becoming more and more profound. People will tell me that I was insane to have continued my use. I agree. But I had a confused belief that I was delving into the inner workings of my mind. In actuality all I was really doing was making a mess of my judgement and reason. I later struggled with great difficulty to clean and order my intellect. And of course the promise of beauty in a life of isolation and

misunderstanding held my heart destined to proceed to the nether regions of my soul. I was born with a destiny. No matter how hopeless my life was I always knew that. Be it one of rapture or torment, my being was meant to walk on the thin ice of existence.

Marijuana didn't seem to do it for me anymore so I started to search for another drug. Fearing legal ramifications I explored the world of legal highs. Nutmeg was my first choice. It was similar to marijuana however it lasted up to eight hours. This turned out to be a nightmare as all my drug experiences were becoming. The first time I tried it I was tired. I was lying in bed - about five hours into the trip. All of a sudden sleep paralysis hit me. My body started to jerk in every direction like I was having an epileptic fit. If it wasn't my body than it was an evil spirit come to harass me for experimenting with a reality that I should have let go a long time ago. The soil had gone bad on the other side. Repeatedly I was warned. But *The Other Side of Sight* was not so easy to forsake. Failure was never an option when I pursued the grail. And the weight of this reality that I've worded myself into has taught me to pray as I was as a child in the madness of a migraine.

I wasn't yet a praying man as I dropped out of school around the same time that I discovered nutmeg. I was twenty-three and my life had reached the point of no return. School was frustrating and futile. The workout that I had begun to give my brain finally gave way to a slothful thought process. I had tremendous difficulties reading and concentrating in class. I was tired of learning as I sought the bliss of a

divine ignorance. I remember my art history professor saying, "The learning process is something that will continue for all of us for the rest of our lives." I wasn't enthused to hear that. I wanted to give my mind a rest from the deep and at times painfully difficult thought processes it took for me to understand something. All I needed to know was that in the face of the noumenal this was all meaningless. I had to bring myself out of these negative thought patterns and construct a more substantial theory of reality. It had to be one that was going to coincide with my own personal purpose in life. But that purpose seemed to get off of the beaten track and I wasn't too sure how to get back on. In school I was still getting good grades. I had about a 3.8 grade point average when I left. But I was slowly drifting into more profound areas of study as I was trying to integrate different parts of my psyche into consciousness with drugs. I had stuck with school long enough. I was finally on a new medical coverage. There was no longer a reason to put up with the stress of classes anymore. I was so glad to get out of there and relieved to take a break from the force fed vegetation of concrete. During this time I was accepted to receive Supplemental Security Income from the government. Although I thought this was a life savor I started to fall into a deep depression. School was exhausting, but at least it gave me a goal to work towards. Now I didn't have a goal for the future and the person I always thought I was destined to become was almost ready to give up.

Being on SSI I always tried to make the best of my time and be as productive as I could. I felt guilty not having a job and inadequate for not being able to handle school. My parent's disappointment in me began to grow with each day. I had to redeem myself and prove that I was still a fully functioning member of society. As much as I dreaded my art history class I tried to gain inspiration from the various artist that I encountered. I saw no reason why I couldn't build my own portfolio. My technique needed work but I had an imagination that could hold weight against other psychological masterpieces. I was always conscious of the wild imagery that passed through my mind and I enjoyed investigating the surreal with my work. I also had it in mind to shape myself in a way. Somehow I was going to put my hands inside my head and sort out the mess that I had made. I knew I had the power to manipulate my mind for personal growth. I just didn't know if I had the will. My character was still in the basement of a delicate and weak stature. So I tried painting to keep myself occupied. In the process of creation I was an untamed hermit. But life had bestowed on me a toll that left my self-image crawling through the sewers of my unconscious mind. My art became more and more intimate and growing with passion. But my social identity became more and more reclusive as I came to fear the world. In the process these phobias came to reach alarming levels. I began to let my appearance go.

In the canvas I looked like Salvador Dali. I was a wildly inventive creator of psychical juxtapositions. But in the reality that

came to consume my physical being I began to look a mess. I was always fair and unable to grow a beard. Of the facial hair that I did have I looked like living death. My hair was growing long and savage. I looked more like a beastly woman that tried to cultivate her own testosterone. I was in the midst of passionate expression that blinded me of my relation to the world as a freakish monster. In times like these your appearance does not seem to matter in relation to your mood. My philosophy had always been that it is better to feel good than to look good. And the truth of image did not seem to bear relevance against the riddles of reality and the mysteries of the universe. Whenever I lost myself in the garden of creation and flowed the passion from my fingers in the face of the great Originator the last thing to cross my mind was to worry if my socks matched. That changed with time as I learned to present myself to the liking of others in order to receive common courtesy, which came to give energy to a better mood and a higher opinion of myself. It was very fortunate for me that I came to hold a vanity in my appearance after so many years of such a poor self-image. I bloomed much later in life after almost giving in to the depression of a deserted reflection.

I spent most of my time in my parent's basement and avoided people at all cost. I couldn't come to terms with a disfigurement that exaggerated with every day. I had come to believe that people were good for nothing. Every now and then I met a great one that had a place in the heavens of my memory, but they were few and far in-between. My family and especially my father thought very little of

me. I remember my grandfather visited once while my brother, my father, and myself were home. At the time my brother was sick with the flue. As my grandfather came to see me he was also curious about my brother who was sick. My father said, "One of them is sick in mind and the other is sick in body. Guess which one." That was the type of mentality that I always had to deal with from my father. He was never a positive influence in my life. But if it wasn't at home it was every where I went. People always gave me dirty looks. Not just that but they were often disgusted to see me. Strangers that I didn't know. I was living out a bizarre sociological experiment. This came to be the lowest point in my life as I related to society. The hatred and loathing that people felt for me compiled into the questioning of every mistake I ever made as being common knowledge. My life was broadcast into the minds of people that didn't know me. People that had no idea who I was suddenly saw me as I took my path from birth and fell into the sewers of this mutated nightmare that they had to witness. Negative judgement was stalking me every time I left the comfort and security of my parent's basement. I imagined I was never going to be able to adjust in the world again. I never forgot the way I was treated during this time in my life. I took it as a painful lesson that I was never going to allow myself to fall victim to the cruel shuns of social disfigurement again. You come to find just how shallow and rotten people can be. Someone once said that people are basically good. It wasn't someone that suffered from depression. It had nothing to do with my character or anything I had ever done in life. It

was simply a question of appearance. I could have been an angel sent from heaven and someone might have spit on me not even knowing. Unfortunately I had to let this episode drag out to a climatic end before I was going to be able to learn the greater lesson. It taught me to look after myself, and find self worth and self-love in the beauty of my mind that was so invisible to others. Somehow I had to find a way to reflect my inner being in the way I presented myself. That was a difficult task considering how far I had strayed from my inner self.

This was the third time that I admitted myself into the hospital. It was another big mistake. I realized it as soon as I checked in. I found out that my medical insurance would not cover my stay. They transferred me to another hospital. But first I was to be taken to the emergency room of yet another hospital while I waited for an opening in the psychiatric unit. While I waited in the emergency room all the staff members began to harass me. For about five hours I listened to them make jokes about my sexuality. Because I was severely depressed to begin with, and saw my life as reaching a social death, I had a hard time keeping the tears from rolling down my face. I was so confused. I didn't know who I was anymore. In my art I was brilliantly myself and the reborn prodigy of my childhood. I had a purpose that walked with the fire of forever in the fountains of my fingers. But I came to realize in the climatic finish of my hospital stay that I was a leper. I put my hand over my eyes and tried to hide the tears that kept flowing. The staff and especially the security guard

began to refer to me as "the broad with the sunglasses." A policeman came into the hospital to drop another young man off that was to be transferred to a psychiatric unit. He looked at me and then at the security guard and said to him, "You have to have compassion." The security guard smiled with a smug disposition. After the policeman left the guard stood there and stared me down like a real tough guy. I must have made him feel real good about himself. If I wasn't in the shape I was I could have put him in the hospital. But I hated to give in to my anger. Since my youth I always endeavored to be better than that. "You got to watch out for those UV rays", they said to each other. They also referred to me as a twenty-three year old Hispanic female because of my stunted facial hair. But it didn't stop there. When I was finally transferred to the psychiatric hospital it continued. While outside having a cigarette, the staff made jokes about Pat, the androgynous character from *Saturday Night Live*. This was the quandary that I created for them. Then again another staff member thought to say to one of his coworkers very clearly and distinctly, "I have to accept what I am. I'm not some tall scary guy." I was the only one there that was tall and scary. I was dangerously depressed when I checked into the hospital. In there I was given an image of myself that only proved to me how worthless and repulsive I had become. I was expecting to get help when I checked in and hoping to meet people that were understanding of my situation. But even the patients banded against me. Some of the staff members exposed me as a rat when I asked to be moved because of my roommate's odd

behavior. It was a hellish nightmare that I couldn't escape. I couldn't buy a friend. Though there were a few staff members that actually cared to be in a position where they could offer guidance they didn't make up for the treatment that I received. It was going to take some very painful years for me to regain my trust in people as I slowly built my self-esteem and began to take care of my appearance.

As I let family members and friends read this book in an attempt to perfect my style and gain constructive criticism I let a friend who is a nurse read it. When she reached this part of the book she made it a point to comment. "You know sometimes when we are depressed we become paranoid and imagine that people are saying things when they are not. I think that in this section of the book you should say that they weren't really harassing you as you imagined they were." Is this typical of people in the health profession? "I didn't imagine any of it." I said. "I find that hard to believe!" she exclaimed with a fierceness in her voice as if she was chastising me. I opened up a great wound to her. I'm not the only one that has faced an injustice in the dungeons of those who present an image of hope and help. So much of the world is about image without substance. I don't hear voices and of all the things I have endured in my life I have never been more insulted than by this woman. She was more willing to believe in the vision that people are so quick to denounce as a result of an over active imagination than she was the reality of people. In her inability to grasp an all too real construction of reality she poured vinegar all over me.

There is a massive globe of astronomical fire rotating in the firm posture of its own mass in the center of our solar system. We revolve around it as we walk about in the oblivion of the microcosms that are our own lives. It is so fantastic and unbelievable, and the odds of creation tell a tale that is virtually impossible. The chance of existence becoming known to itself had to be so much more than just a miracle that I can not fathom in words the wonder of something so staggering in its improbable realization. People live and breathe an astronomical phenomenon everyday in what was most likely the happenstance of a seed with the signature of something greater than we can ever imagine. Be it even the breath of God the fact of there actually being a universe is meant to test the capacity of the brain in which we find the unbelievable. It's so unreal that we exist. So many of us simply accept it to be true in the surface of our minds as though it is the simplest fact that we can possibly comprehend. If you stop and think about it the truth of existence is more than mountainous for us to grasp. But my experiences in life seem harder for some to comprehend. Unfortunately I have to make it clear to the reader that none of the occurrences within this book are dependent upon anyone else's belief in them. These are my personal experiences and I can not write what I don't know. It is the reader's prerogative to believe what he or she wants. But no one has the right to deny me of what I know to be true.

After the hospital I tried to adjust to society by salvaging and harnessing the self-esteem that I found in my creative mind. I was

still on disability and had plenty of time on my hands. I spent all of it painting. I was determined to do something with my art. There were two people that passed in the ocean of my life that haunted me for the duration of my earthly journey. The first was the psychic. Of powers of perception she placed me with the gods. I was to greet their glorious hearts with the passion of my own overflowing blood as it decorated the empty canvas with a creativity of fire. Then in the direction of destiny there was the conversation that I had with the knife maker that taught me a lesson in engraving. Of questions I asked the healing query that guided me to serve a purpose in the vitality of the violin. He gave me the pieces I needed to cultivate a future for myself with my art. The mystery was wrapping up everything into a package of success and foresight. I followed the direction of the soothsayers despite the depression and the torment of demons. Somehow I had to figure out the collectivity of my vision in gathering the characters of a glorious entry unto redemption, whereupon the door would open and let me soar into salvation. For now, all I needed to know was that my labor was playing a vital part in my personal growth. The more I painted the better I felt about myself. It helped me more than my therapist. The mystifying powers of prophetic dreams revealed themselves to me on canvas. I had the ability to shape my destiny through the use of symbols (As guides that not only represented situations, but also created them.) It's a wonderful gift. I had an ability to foresee the future on canvas. All I needed was to work towards evolving my individuality into the

surreal nature of my goals. In my art history class I remember the teacher being very supportive to my intellectual disabilities. After one of my tests, which I did poorly on, she wrote, "You have a lot to build on. Keep persevering." I became so unsuccessful in her class that I left heeding everything she taught. I probably benefited more from the class than anyone else did. After studying so many of the great artist one of the students said, "Its amazing that anyone can actually make it in the art world." My teacher said in response, "It takes the gift of foresight." Artists that are able to anticipate the next direction and create the future are the ones that become successful. Years beforehand when I brought my portfolio to the teacher who was helping me, much of it reflected my lapse into my illness. "People don't want to see the past." She said. "No one wants to go backwards into the Dark Ages in someone's art. People want to see the future." If it wasn't the destination of mankind than it was going to be my own. And if I wasn't to work towards the window of the art world I was to work towards the doorway of my own deliverance unto the concentration of creativity. It was a place where I hoped to regain my inner self in the salvation of a monastic destiny. The future was on an inevitable course towards a surreal reality. There was no better way to explore the unfolding of time than through the surreal. When I became burned out of ideas for paintings I'd do abstractions. After a while I had a collection of about twenty to thirty paintings lying around. For me this was a major accomplishment in life. I had gone through a major depression and came out of it with some wonderful

works of art. I kept persevering as my art history professor insisted I do. And though I barely received a C in her class I came out of the cave of blind insight and into a world of vision and magic: a portfolio of psychic energy that was going to guide me towards a future had I the will to see things through. Once in a while a relative would drop by my house and I'd get to display my work. The admiration that awoke in my family as they saw this incredible display of passion that I had been pouring out on canvas comforted my purpose in living. In the midst of social disfigurement the compensation that my art created redeemed my soul. When I pursued art for the joy of creation and personal growth I believed it sent to me by the great Originator of the garden. It was a divine product of my own creativity in emulation of God's great exhale. I liked to imagine my ancestry rich with artistry and the passing of the passion through the blood of my Blackfoot lineage. This awesome influence has at times brought me salvation. However, every gift was at a price that dwelled in me a mania as my art sometimes interacted precariously with myself and at times with others. I often made the mistake of falling in love with my work and involving myself too deeply in a relationship of paranormal activity.

Some of the relationships were healthier than others were. The first painting I did reminded everyone of Dali. It was very odd and dreamlike in nature. In the center of the painting was an undeveloped head turned to the side. His features, such as eyes, a nose, a mouth, and ears were not brought out. He had no hair. It looked like a sculpture that had not been finished. He had two arms, but no body.

One arm rested across the ground in front of his head. The other pointed up towards the sky and held in its hand an eyeball. It almost looks as if the eye was about to be catapulted. From the neck is a power cord that lies on the ground. From the top of the head is a large tree that has rooted itself to the scalp. The ground is covered with grass and in front of one of the arms is an anthill with about six ants making their way about. In the background you can see the sky, and in the sky are clouds that have large drops of rain flowing from them. There are also four trees in the background that are shaped more like giant mushrooms with long thin stems and rings around them. From behind the head is a walkway that leads into the front of the head. The walkway becomes a small pool and in the pool is a man in a black suit holding a briefcase. He is looking up at the head as it is turned to the side displaying its large eyeball in its hand.

I had a lot of fun with this painting. It was to be a symbol to take precedence over my personal growth and initiate the remainder of my portfolio. I let my imagination take over. As I was working on it I let my unconscious mind dictate what it was going to mean as imagery unfolded like a dream. I later came to conclude that the small man was me as was the head holding the eye. The small man was the only part of the painting that seemed to have a foothold in the ordinary. He was strong, conservative, and independent. He was trying to make sense of the wild world that he found himself in. He was left-brain dominant. He was efficient and analytical. He was a business man and good with numbers. The only problem was that he was insignificant in comparison to the surreal environment that was the

product of my unconscious mind. He didn't belong there. He was the conscious mind of thought in the realm of words trying to make sense of a greater self that existed in non-verbal thought. The head represented me in my right brain dominance and to a degree in my illness. It was overpowering and as an individual it was not fully developed in the eyes of the small man. The small man also appears as anyone that views the painting trying to make sense of it. There is a huge contrast in these two aspects of myself and I illustrate that to the viewer who is faced with the same puzzlement as they walk into the path of my head. The shaping of my personality that this painting came to dictate was a guide towards compensating with my left brain. I wanted to be strong and independent, but in order to do so I had to come to terms with the part of me that was bizarre and unusual. I had to understand that part of me. There had to be more resolution. And as resolution came the small man standing in the pool learned to adjust to the oddity that he was presented with. The two halves then were to be able to even off and learn to communicate with each other as the small man of normality came to tame the surreal into a philosophy that was bendable to his will. Anyway, that was how I interpreted it. Artwork grows with the individual and so does its meaning. I may look at it ten years from now and see something entirely different. In many ways it has come to represent many situations in my life that I encountered long after painting it. One of which is the writing of this book. The prophetic power of this

painting that I started years ago has remained buoyant with me in a pool of unlimited potential.

Another one of my paintings was like the first. It is surreal and reminds me of a dream. I loved to do these types of paintings. Anyone can perfect a technique to do realism. That never impressed me. To explore the imagination and come up with something that had a depth to it was more important to me. The painting that I did is of a plaster head. It is the head of a woman that I acquired at a yard sale. It is a little larger than actual size and stirred my imagination. I did a painting of the head on a black and white checkerboard. The head is looking to the west. She's very majestic and reminds me of the ancient Greeks. I didn't paint her exactly the way that she looked though. The facial expression was very soft and pleasing. For some reason I painted her with a stern expression. You could see in her face that she was a woman of wisdom and she knew the hardships of life. On the checkerboard were scattered objects. A violin sat atop the stump of a tree. A mysterious book lay opened with scribbled lines instead of words. At the time I was contemplating the power of words as they related to imagery. And there was always a mystery that lied in the future of a book that I had not yet read or perhaps even written. There was a large silver hubcap and a pigeon off to the side. Also included was a sandal, and an umbrella with pills under it; a wicker basket and a street sign that had no name; a hot pepper, and a small birdhouse. There was also a small chest and a bottle of black ink. In the background was a large tidal wave headed for everything

on the chessboard. The pigeon was the only thing I placed there that had the power to escape. I never finished this one. It still needs a professional touch.

I never understood what I was trying to say with this painting. And I never believed that I should have always had to know what I

was saying. I have many dreams that go unanswered and unexplained. And as with my paintings they are the same as dreams. I let my unconscious mind dictate the scenario and have fun with the creative process, as should be when someone paints. I seldom go forth with a predetermined picture and enjoy more to let my imagination be my guide. After I've painted comes the analytical and the process of learning from the unconscious. My work is much more enjoyable this way and allows for a certain amount of freedom. The stone head in the painting may represent permanence. Stone is sometimes associated with the soul and immortality. The statues of many ancient civilizations have persevered over time. They carry the souls of the people they represent into a new age. In the painting, apart from the pigeon, the head would not have been destroyed. Disturbed from its moment, it was going to find itself whole again washed up in the future of another scenario. On the other hand, everything else would have been destroyed by the power of the wave. She doesn't seem to be phased by the wave. Made of stone she continues over time even though everything around her will eventually be swept away. I thought that she might represent my feminine side, as it is so strong in my character. As I read from Jung, moods are associated with the anima. In some way the wave may have some kind of relation to her, as a shift in moods. In the painting the shift in moods is clearing the objects held onto from the past. In other words, making way for the future where she will be found again. From there a new life will begin. Even with such a ferocious

wave of emotion she will still persevere. I suppose I was playing God with my imagination and washing away the insignificance of possessions that we hold on to in life. And wiping away the emotional energy that we attach to those possessions. My mother mentioned to me that the head represented her as Freud might have thought. Maybe it isn't necessarily her, but rather the archetype of the mother. I've tried to envision her as the force of nature that brings on the wave. The many pieces may also be thought of as memories that wash away with the dawn of a new day. The woman the dreamer as she plays the pieces of day residue in her dream to wake with the wave of the morning. I'm sure there are many things that others will see in this painting. Perhaps how we prepare for the inevitable and hope for the best. But sometimes a painting should be something that you just have fun with, as if it is a game of chess against yourself. There need not be a deep meaning to associate with it and often it should be for the sake of intrigue that we create what is simply interesting to look at and question.

The abstract paintings that I did are hard to describe. Like the girl from the art institute told me, they are of emotions. When I did them I was experimenting with that type of art for the first time. I had no idea what I was doing. I just kept adding different colors and wild brush strokes until I came up with something that impressed me. I like to go back and look at them to see if I can find faces or other images in them. They were done with random brushstrokes and I didn't purposely try to put anything recognizable in them. Still I can

see bizarre images in them. They're very deep and subliminal, but entirely subjective. When I did them I wasn't aware of the images that I was painting. They revealed themselves later, especially after I studied them. These types of paintings are the most enjoyable to create. There is a lot of freedom involved in the process and doing them I learned to appreciate an artist like Pollock. I have a better understanding of the reasoning involved in the creative process of these pieces and much of it is about the process itself.

Another painting that I did that truly came out well was a painting of a man with a white shirt and a black tie. The thing I like about this painting is that he is wearing a gas mask and surrounded by green smoke. It's a powerful painting of myself as I attended a wedding with my still bizarre appearance. The image is disturbing to look at. It was intended that way. It was a painting of the ugliness of image and how I lived and suffered with that ugliness as it repelled people and even family. In some of my work I've tried to present the grotesque as something that is unique and caries a depth that fathoms far below the surface of an image of beauty. In art the hideous can be harnessed and transformed into something that evokes the depth of emotion and appreciation. If it's not in some form of creative expression people have a hard time stomaching it. Yet even in my art I have never held the belief that image is a factor of truth or indication of what lies beneath that mask. Though image can come to dictate the course of ones identity the persona of the human being always impressed me as a facade of an individuals true relation to the

universe. The painting was a painful piece to work on yet part of a therapeutic process. I never wanted to confront that time in my life, but my self-image as a true artist was so powerful that I was able to work on pieces that captured other's images of me. Of course by confronting a terrible pain I was able to gain strength from it. At times my art gave me great courage to change.

There was another painting I did that everyone loved. I had taken a picture of a statue at a park where I live. It's a Greek statue. I love statues. I always wanted to do sculpture but I was better at painting. A statue has a feel to it that a painting lacks. Statues house the echoes of the souls they represent. They carry the weight of permanence and immortality. I thought that if I couldn't sculpt a statue I could at least paint one. So that's what I did. This one painting had a mysterious quality about it. It had a mood to it. You can only see the statue from the torso up. He is hunched over and facing east as his head is turned towards the viewer and looking at the sky. In the background is a

large tree to the left of the painting. Branches fill the rest of the painting and through them you can see the sky. The setting of the sun fills the horizon with a haunting aura of time's passage on the eternal. The thing I like about this painting is that you don't see the rest of his body and can't tell what he is doing. As he faces towards the sky he has no eyes. That's my favorite part of the painting. When I look at the painting I see this man gazing at the sky but looking inwards. The branches represent the paths that his thoughts are taking him. Its as though he has a mind that you can imagine to be working in the background as you gaze into the vacuum of his eyes. I was really pleased with the way that this painting came out. People seem to like this one more than any of the others that I've done. I've always had a liking for the ancient Greeks. This painting took me back through the ages to a time of idealized thought that had been forsaken with the centuries.

Before doing these paintings I had not done any artwork in a long time and even considered giving it up. My philosophy professor got my gears turning and intellect burning, but it was my art history

professor that actually pushed me to do something creative. With this collection of work I found a new identity. It was one that I could be proud of. It wasn't that I hadn't been known as an artist before. I was always known as an artist, but now I had a body of work that was entirely unique to the intricacies of my personality. This wasn't an assignment from school and it wasn't commissioned by someone else. It was all mine and all for the joy of creation. Although inspired by artist like Dali, my individuality came through in every piece. The brilliantly mad scientist found a way to delve into his psyche and actually bring harmony to his mind naturally. The part of myself that needed to explore the nature of reality found a way to do so in a manner that actually built upon my world instead of making a mess of it. Each piece was a reflection of my soul and a guide towards the future. The unfolding of my life into something that I could take pride in was something that had eluded me for a long time.

I was always in the process of exploring the hidden meanings behind my art as well as my dreams. I read once that dreams do not present themselves in decrypted messages. Rather they are expressive of a language that bestows its components in the unpolluted rivers of thinking. Dreams are closer to the often-bizarre truth of the personality and the just as fantastic truths of creation. These worlds that we disregard in a waking life of illusion hold more truth about ourselves then any mirror reflection of material substance or status. The people we believe we are as we bathe in the oceans of a material existence further disassociate ourselves from ourselves. The greater

actuality of identity is in the raw tissues of the mind. I can not believe in the structure of material being as the true shape of reality. And I can not believe in that structure as representing the true form of the human being. Matter is a play of shadows in Plato's cave, and there is a brilliance of natural thought. Have you ever had a dream that relayed something so pure and conceptual that you couldn't define it in words? The basic structure of what should be deemed immaculate thought lies in a non-verbal format. Things become encrypted and need to be solved when we find them in that part of our brain that is limited by language. Any writer, including myself, can only suggest to the purity of that which they are trying to bring forth as reflection. And even then with the greater technique it loses something in the translation. The objective nature of events is spread throughout a world of subjective imaginations. Depending on the skill of a writer one can clearly describe an object such as an apple and suggest to the reader to imagine it. But no matter how descriptive this object will become words can not capture an essence that allows for the same apple to be imagined by everyone. There are far too many missing pieces. On the other hand an artist's rendering of an apple carries with it an essence of its own that is a clear and pure transmission. An apple can bring with it many different layers of meaning that spread reflections throughout our individual realities. But closer to the truth than words the nonverbal interaction creates the shortest distance between points A and B. The ability to articulate with an image is a far superior form of communication than any other. Though the

ensemble of instrumental music also brings with it a transmission that is closer to the essence of pure thought. With music it's a rhythmical language that can be reduced numerically in a universal form of communication. Certain music such as that of Mozart excites an abstract thought process that plays upon the primary language of the brain. Be it an almost primordial language that exists in the beginnings of time and in the dawn of creation. When I listen to Eric Clapton play guitar in the song *White Room* I hear a regression to a very fundamental anguish of existence that far exceeds the surreal lyrics of the song. The suggestion of imagery contained in the words are ultimately emphasized purely and clearly through instrument, which comes to break down to the very heart of original thought. The communications of the naked sound and the artist's imagery interact directly with a nonverbal thought process that lies beneath the layers of dialect. The combinations of the two have the potential to synchronize an expression of the very structure of the human mind in a way that words fail to do. The closest attempt I have seen to bring forth the synchronization of sound and image in expressing a fundamental level of thought was in the movie *2001 A Space Odyssey* when the character Dave travels to *Infinity and Beyond*. The movie *Altered States* made an attempt as it symbolized the withdrawal into the womb of existence, but the movie never captured the essence of mind in a harmony of sight and sound as was attempted in *2001*. I have not seen anyone else explore the true potential of these two mediums in a way that strikes me as regressing to a preexisting

thought that is expressive in conceptual terms, which still fills my own mind with many possibilities. But I was one that also made an attempt to translate the inconceivable with this constricting and contaminated device we know as language.

In the beginnings of my nomadic ventures through cyberspace I came across a news group on dreams. In the news group people posted dreams that they had and other people replied with their interpretations. I decided to post my vision. It wasn't quite a dream, but it was close enough and sure to produce some responses. To my surprise I received one response from a woman that had a similar experience. The only difference was that she had traveled through a triangle instead of two ovals. She told me that the experience was an evolution to a greater spiritual being and that I should consider myself to be blessed. My questioning of this as proof of God's existence left her to ask me if there was such a being. She mentioned that there were different levels on which someone might have this vision. According to her mine seemed to touch upon the cosmic. She also referred me to the writings of Carl Jung. I knew a little of Jung and of the Collective Unconscious. I had some understanding of archetypes and knew of the feminine and male aspects of the personality, which he called the anima and the animus. But whenever his name was mentioned I always thought of Freud. I thought him to be a cold intellectual that reminded me of many of the doctors I came across. Freud wasn't someone I was ever going to consider as being a savior of my own psychological preoccupation. I had studied the history of

philosophy but my knowledge of psychology and theory of the mind was not what it should have been for someone that was looking for answers. I stumbled upon pieces of the puzzle here and there. It amazes me what I didn't know for so many years. The better half of the population had the upper hand on me. Or at least the ones that actually read. Unfortunately I was often obstructed in my ability to read. Its hard to read something that is telling you one thing when your mind is telling you another. I had a disability that not only made me feel stupid but also at times made me kick myself for being so. I had to do something about this intellectual barricade. This wall of sluggishness kept what I always knew in my heart to be a marvel of passionate intensity from shinning through. I had a raw fountain of intellect waiting to realize its potential. Had I the power to see past the haze and embrace myself for the sheer concentration of creativity that banded in bursts of beauty I could be someone and I knew it.

I hadn't yet reached my full potential when I first began to closely observe the heart of Jungian psychology. I was always reminded of what I was told by my roommate during my first hospital stay that it was imperative that I study everything I could about my illness. But for me that meant researching the dynamics of the mind itself. The dominance of my illness as a factor in my life came with the birth of my vision. I needed to uncover as many of the mysteries that I could surrounding this spinning wheel of universal order. I had enough of a raw understanding to build some theory of this order as a composition of mind and even speculate its operation, but I needed to know if this

was applicable to other people's theories. As I discovered it was not unique to me and I knew that someone like Jung had dedicated his life to building a theory of mind that was going to explain things clearly to me.

Jung's work was with the psyche, which he distinguished by three levels. There is consciousness, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious. Consciousness is that part of the mind that holds information in awareness. It is organized and controlled by the ego. The ego is what has allowed me to bring everything in this book into consciousness. Also known as a gatekeeper I let my ego relax in writing this book. If you look at a computer screen every program that is running is in the consciousness of the computer. The end user exists as the ego of the computer. Our waking lives are filled with consciousness and controlled by ego. I imagine the more we grow the more conscious we become of different aspects of ourselves. Many of those aspects lie in the personal unconscious. This is like a database of personal experiences and knowledge derived in ones life that has been forced out of consciousness or unable to be brought into consciousness. It can exist of painful memories and or irrelevant information. Groups of information in the personal unconscious can clump together to form complexes that have an unconscious effect on conscious being. These complexes are not always dangerous to conscious being as some of them can be driving forces behind success. The personal unconscious also exists of stored information that is easily accessible by the ego. It is like a hard drive on a

computer. Everything in this book was stored in my personal unconscious as the ego accessed it. Some of the things in this book were accessed from the collective unconscious and later stored in my personal unconscious. The collective unconscious evolved with the human being and is inborn as a database of the history of mankind. It's an inherited mind that influences the course of every individual and links him or her to the past of the human species. It's a database of human existence that reveals bits and pieces to those who dig deep enough. It is similar to the Internet. When you purchase a new computer you are able to bring into a new consciousness a network that has been preexistent to that machine. Every human brain inherits this universal mind that is former to their own life experiences. The collective unconscious is a database of archetypes. It is similar in theory to Plato's sun of forms. These archetypes are the prototypes that every life situation is modeled after. This was Jung's theory of the mind, which was developed as an evolution of Freud's work. It's one that I happen to be very fond of and it brought me piece of mind in understanding the dynamics of myself.

There is one archetype that Jung thought of that held my curiosity and excited my imagination. He called this archetype the "Self." This is a central figure that organized the totality of the personality or psyche. It is the central archetype in the collective unconscious. Jung's theory in the purpose of life is to reach a state of self-realization by drawing upon this archetype to unite the psyche. According to Jung this task is rarely completed and only figures such

as Jesus and Buddha have come close. I had to believe because of the shear joy of the first encounter of my vision that it was an image of Jung's "Self." And in that it was an exhibition of pure thought that preexists the clumsy conditions of matter and the ungainly fabric of a western world education. For a brief period I knew more of life in the immaculate embrace of joy than I have ever known in my scholarly pursuit of the experience. I don't claim having reached perfection, as I will surely be criticized to my dying day. But in the truth of creation touching my tongue, I claim in convictions as true as the sun, that I was offered a taste of it in my youth. I wouldn't have gone through life so blinded if I weren't given this experience. Every human being has the mechanics of what I realized to be my own Self in the rejoicing of existence. This vision is working in the background of every mind as it holds the personality together. Have you ever felt a moment of pure beauty in the atmosphere of your own presence? I imagine that everyone can recall of an unpolluted moment at some point in their life where they transcend the rough edges of their own world in being touched by something that seeps deeply into the heart. This is the synchronizing of the Self as it tunes the inner world with an outer experience. This Self can be recognized to exist in the enchantment of life's more profound experiences. A life that touches something of a divinity in the nature of individuality has a greater purpose in the unfolding of their life. That direction was being shoved down my throat for years. The collective unconscious defines a blueprint of destiny that is almost inescapable. Everything in my

life will always continue towards the realization of my vision of Jung's Self. He also believed the psyche to be made of psychic energy. Energy can not be destroyed. This was the hint of certainty I had been searching for. And I came to see where Kant might have been mistaken about ultimate reality. Perhaps it was possible that he looked in the wrong place and my own intuition of myself led me to believe the mind a greater reality than any other. This living energy of thought and being that conceives, imagines, and knows, creates the ultimate factors of truth within and without ourselves. The noumenal is a limit that is ultimate only to itself and it simply encloses the cosmos of our mind. And it is the structure of the mind that is an intricate interface of infinite combinations within itself that holds the seemingly implausible possibility of verging unto and beyond the door of death. Yet it holds the possibility none the less and what greater of life can there be than to live to the fullest of one's potential in the prospect of being brought onto the light that shimmers the energy of eternity in the consummation of the Self. This "Self" is greater than my conscious being and greater than I know myself to be. Einstein claimed that if the full potential of the human brain was utilized an individual had the ability to transform into pure energy. I wanted to believe that this full potential existed in the entire organization of the Self as being completed beyond regression to matter. As was known by Jung this is a task that is virtually impossible to complete. I never had the self-deception to believe I had the ability to do this. But I knew in theory it was possible for anyone

given the right components of brain operation. And I also wanted to believe that the more profound my inner work became the greater chance I had of a symmetrical being beyond this life in the heart of cosmic order. In Jung I had found the meaning of existing as a process of individuation. Something of this procedure was to lead unto and beyond the door of death.

Unfortunately the work of Jung and the meaning of life was still questionable in my mind. I could read for years about theories and beliefs and never be able to let it absorb into my mind. My comprehension and learning process was stunted by my fear of a world that I found to be uninhabitable. I was very bitter that my vision didn't parallel this world. Hidden deep within my heart was an identity that brought me fame with God. But in this world of situation and strife I wasn't known to have a heart and there wasn't a God. My mind had been disoriented too often and studying Jung didn't sink in until the writing of this book. I was still looking for the holy grail in its various disguises of which were actually unnatural and potentially dangerous forms. I was one to take the quick and easy path to heaven. I wanted the bliss of supernatural delight and I wanted it every waking hour of my life. When you've been given a gift of pure fulfillment how can you come back and settle for less? To be denied the beauty within you is a horrible wound. The magnificent seemed so unattainable to work towards with conventional means.

I began taking short cuts into my inner world. I gave little attention to social events and family. I needed a direct link into this

network of reunification so that I could bring my personality to the joy of completion. It never occurred to me that what I was attempting was impossible. The force of my will upon this matter was in such a forward motion that it wasn't easy to put on the brakes. I came across a device that was going to excite the mad scientist in me. It was a gadget that covers your eyes and when you enter REM sleep a sensor lights up and supposedly makes you aware while you are dreaming. I bought this product without hesitation. I wanted to be able to have a lucid dream by simply wearing this device while I slept. I also believed that it would help me to enter sleep paralysis without having my body jerk in every direction. And I was hopeful to bring back the vision. The device didn't bring on the vision but I was right about the sleep paralysis. I was sleeping in my room and wearing the device one night when I suddenly woke up to find a demonic monkey jumping back and forth over my body. This monkey apparently came from a painting of a primate that I did, which was hanging on my bedroom wall. The ape had control of my body and I couldn't move. I struggled as hard as I could and finally reached out to grab him but he was gone. When I took the device off and opened my eyes it was over. I never knew why I painted a monkey in the first place. But he came to represent the oddity that my life was shaping into. The bizarre nature of my own mind as being so far disassociated from the vision I was trying to obtain pushed me further away.

I needed something that I could work with and I was going to find it. There was nothing for me in the external world and in the bonds of human relations. I sought refuge in my inner world. There was no other place that I wanted to be. There was no one special in my life that I could find a companion in as I walked along the wooded paths of immaturity. The only thing I knew to do in my loneliness was to look inward for answers. The means by which I did were not exactly safe. I decided to go all out and combined the effects of Nutmeg with the device. I had a hunch that if I were to remain awake on the drug for the full eight hours and then use the Nova dreamer that I was bound to experience something profound. I don't recall anything on the nutmeg other than the usual fixation on Christ as I went over the pieces of my life. As the trip wore on I started to become tired and it was time to use the Nova Dreamer. I had a theory that everything I contemplated during my time on nutmeg was going to unite in a

movie of images. Something like day residue. The point of using the nutmeg was to bring that part of myself that faces and prepares for death into consciousness. Of course I could have done this without the drug. But with the drug I was in a state of forced preparation. In such a state I had the courage to look at parts of my life that were difficult to face. Including that part of me that did the drug, which was what always caused the paranoia. Of course when the drug wore off I never accomplished anything because I went back to a life where I could avoid death so preparing was not an issue. But this time I planned to have a symbol that was going to provide me with valuable insight. I fell asleep wearing the device without complication. When you fall asleep and begin to dream you are not aware of the flow of time. I became aware in my slumber through the means of some very lucid imagery. The imagery wasn't hypnogogic but it was enough to etch itself in my memory forever. I saw myself sitting in my room in the basement of my parent's house. I was in front of my desk and very involved in what I was doing. I was engrossed in the art of alchemy. Alchemy was very popular in medieval times. It was an attempt to turn base metals into gold. Also it was a search for an ultimate cure for disease and an attempt to forever prolong life. Alchemy was the spawn of modern day chemistry. It was the art of the magician and the mystic. Jung interpreted it as the process of individuation where the individual works towards the Self that Jung defined as being the central archetype of the collective. So there I was in the basement of my parents house as an alchemist learning the

tricks of the trade. Brilliant lights appeared out of nowhere in the dark of the room. I was working magic on ordinary objects spread about my desk. I could see how enthralled I was in the process of altering the properties of matter. In an instant the scene changed and my room disappeared. I saw a musical group standing in the light of a stage. The surroundings may have been of a bar. It was unclear. Wherever they were the band played in an intimate setting and were reminiscent of a folk group from the sixties. The leader of the musical composition sang in praise of Christ's early beginnings beneath the birth of his rise to become a great prophet, "Jesus got his education underground." I was taken back in the bold beauty of this song as it had only one line that need be remembered. But it was definitely a tough act to follow. And it was just great for someone like myself that hadn't the wisdom to walk in the world, as would Christ. I didn't want to wander around for the rest of my life arguing with God about whether or not I was the messiah. Jung thought of Christ as a symbol of the Self, but I thought of him as someone that was horribly crucified. I was entranced by the wonder of the first part of the dream. And I was enjoyed to see myself so passionately exploring the miracles of life. But the second part of the dream scared me to death. I knew it was prophetic and I knew I was going to find a way to live it out. In the desire to further myself towards my vision I was encompassed with the passion of life. But in the second part of the dream there was an exposure. Though it was a positive exposure I did not want to be a martyr in my attempt at reunification.

But this was the dream that I was given and it came from something much greater than myself. I had to believe the great Originator was sketching my destiny with the gold dust of a greater day had I Christ in me to see it through.

With me dreams worked more mysteriously than I could imagine. They were geysers waiting to be brought to the exposure of the air. And once released from the signature of their seed unto the craters of my conscious mind there was a long period of discovering to integrate. Dreams came to me from the future where I could see myself in an advanced state of growth. And when I had one that rang of the reality I longed to taste I hadn't the full understanding of how to grow into it. In my dream I was famous with the great Originator as he guided me to gaze into the examination of myself. I was of an architectural design to be constructed into the palace of a peace whereupon the whispers of angels would call me to rejoice in the soft caress of their wings. This was certainly a dream to unleash the potential of paradise in the concentration of calenture had I let the fire come close enough to swell in the outpouring of my heart. But all of this was so out of synch with the situations and circumstances that life had handed me in the torment of my more than trying time. I was a leper in my relation to society and my illness had been scarring me repeatedly upon my journey. It was to a point where the healing power of this dream seemed impossible to harness in the honesty of my reflections as I held the Self closer to my heart. I hadn't the wisdom to do this and my level of maturity in life was damning me to

walk along the lonely sidewalks of insanity. I was hopelessly lost in the running waters of this world where they carried me into the cave time and time again. No matter what direction my life was to take I sunk in the sands of a wretched reality. I never knew how to take hold of my destiny and forge it to become a glorious rebirth where I could bathe myself in the salvation of knowing the great joy of creation. The heart was always the holder of being born again, but my heart had been tried and tormented - dangling before the terror of death. I was becoming a very angry young man and I had been through enough of the gutter to know that I was going to go through more.

This dream was bestowed upon me in the hope of the Greater Good, that I might draw upon it in an effort to challenge myself into the advanced augmentation of individuation. But before the breath of God granted me with the light of this dream I had been in the process of a life change that couldn't make sense of something so spiritual. This modification of my environment was far removed from anything relating to a numinous quest. I was about to discover the darkness of my disease to the likes of which I had never known possible. The lights were dimming to a point of damnation and the path I knew in life was not of Christ in the least. He would have asked me to let go of the past that was muddled with mistakes and breathe through of a new set of lungs that find peace in the simple joy of having once held a vision of a rounding realization. But I was empty in life and wherever

I went I carried the cross of creation forsaken for the meaningless merry go round of people that pulled me in disastrous directions.

I had lost my father's medical coverage and was in the process of acquiring a new doctor. It was always a frightening transition to transplant my roots in someone else's care. These people could be frozen forests where the footing of my feet went numb while I shivered in silence before the might of their intellect. The doctor that I did find hadn't much of a friendly face and he was passionless to the problems of my path. Without even getting to know me he was insistent that I return to work and try to become a contributing member of society. I knew what it meant to be someone that chipped into this world. And it didn't necessarily mean having something significant to contribute. All it really meant was being able to shovel shit against the wind. I knew that was exactly what I was going to end up doing. I had unlimited potential and had this man gotten to actually know me he could have guided me to do something significant with my life. Doctors have the power to be the influence over which we can succeed in this world if they only look at us for our strengths and encourage our growth. But this doctor didn't wish to see me for anything but an individual that could suffer in silence for minimum wage. I had a talent in this world that I could have prospered from given the right support and motivation. But all that was really important in this world was to learn to kiss ass and bow before so called superiors that have in mind only to belittle you until you cower and cave into the worthlessness that is the working world.

There is nothing in this world like the workforce that can turn a man into a piece of useless flesh and strip him of his self-respect. Going back to work was supposed to help with my self-esteem, but it almost had me commit suicide.

There weren't many jobs that I was qualified for and nothing is available for those that taste a spiritual supper in the makeup of their identity. I had no idea how to proceed with my art and I wasn't going to find a job where I could multiply my imagination in the hierarchy of the heavens. What *I was* going to find was a job where I could clean toilets. And that was what I did. I wasn't enthused to return to work but I knew I was an adult and certain things were required of me as being a man. I found work full time – six nights a week as a janitor at a fast food restaurant. It was the graveyard shift and night after night I worked alone. Except for the mornings when the crew came in to open the store. I was a sensitive surrealist among a sorted bunch of characters that brought the street with them to talk in tongues of my stupidity. I was always blinded to the street and the only wisdom I had was to trust no one. They often referred to me as the "Dog." I had been called worse, but was hoping to find a place in life where I was appreciated for who I was and not what people thought I was. I was dehumanized wherever I was to find my feet firmly planted in this systematized sewer of a so-called civilized world. And I had a rage in me that was inflaming with shadows on the wall as they came to life and assaulted me with their direction leading to the dead. My delusional thinking was excited by the signs of the twilight as they

twinkled their horrors upon the eyes of my naked mind. But despite the sorrow of losing myself to the loneliness of the night I worked gong-ho. And I did so to prove to my doctor that I could be stable and sane in the world of meaningless merry go-rounds. I knew that hard work was a part of life and originally imagined this job to be the support for my obsessive-compulsive creative disorder. I worked a good month and was praised by my boss before I crashed. Working six nights a week was just too much and my anger festered with life with each night. I always remembered what the knife maker said about how difficult it was at twenty-five. I was reaching that age and had never known life to be more miserable. The lack of sun in my life made me worry about the wizardry of the moon and its fixation on my darkening mood. Its cold eye upon the visions that came to me while I was working made me eagerly run towards the morning and the light of day with my tail between my legs and a song of salvation to sing for the sun. But the lows were getting lower and the savior that I sought returned me to the work of nothing as it stalked me in the night. There was such a void of anguish within the art of my isolation that I couldn't bear to be with myself any longer. And then what might have been the comforts of human kind only reminded me that I was to live the nights alone in the sudden hell of being only to myself as one in the world of none. The loneliness begot the anger and the bitterness was the only taste to touch my tongue. I thirsted furiously for the angels of my ancestry to find me again in their warm embrace of familiar fragrances.

I decided to turn to the elixir of an old ailment from centuries of its power upon the foolishness of man. Alcohol was the one wonder of oblivion to knock my conscious cry of agony and woe into a whirlpool of sudden whispers gently dancing with their tongues wetting the lobes of my ears. I was going to be a glorious drunk in a ballet of beautiful fairies sprinkling magic sand about the ground of my humility in life. What I forgot to do was take into consideration that I had a fierce hearted mother ready to rule my reality with an iron fist of fury. Upon sight of my magical potion it was threatening that there was going to be a restraining order put upon me. My mother put an extraordinarily intense amount of effort into making a difficult situation a disaster. My brothers could grow marijuana in their closets and never fear the wrath of a fiery tongue. One of them actually did and she talked to him as though she was a friend that was concerned. That friend wasn't always there for me when I needed someone to talk to. She raged on in anger for hours and if it was her intent to instill loyalty in me she always failed. I was foolish enough to give it back to her simply because she wouldn't let me breathe whether I did or not. I made a mistake and I knew it, but she needed to make sure that I bowed down before her in terror because of it. It was always *Monopoly* and I was to go straight to hell had I the slightest error in the course of my life. Do not pass *Go*! Do not collect $200! I was in a rotten position in life with no hope of recovery. If my life wasn't worthless enough my mother was going to remind me just how worthless it truly was. We argued on and off all

day and things got intense to a point where I could have hit her because she never let up on me when I did something wrong. My brother saw us fighting and he charged at me. I attacked him in a furious display of frustration that I had with my mother since I was a child. My mother knew exactly how to bring out the worst in me and to her it was all an art form. This was a horrible time for me and no one cared to make it any easier.

The next thing I knew the police had arrived and I was taken to the hospital for a psychological evaluation. My cousin was a policeman in the town so I was treated with some respect. The policeman talked to me as I tried to catch some sleep on the stretcher at the hospital. He warned me that the next time I was going to be brought to the station. Spending time in jail at this point would have seemed to be just another day in the life of Jon Gemma. I was in such a limbo of lunacy that a beating or rape was becoming a fact of life. To live with the molestation of men seemed deserving and hadn't the power to phase me. Nothing could sink me any lower then the level of hollow worth that I had already become. The policeman was a genuine angel over the anarchy of my anger and had sincere wishes that I learn to manage my moods. "God forbid you should kill someone. Your life would be over," he said. "Don't be a hero," he told me in the hopes that I never take up the arms of my fists and rage against the world with the frustrations it bestowed upon me. When I talked to the counselor one of the first questions she asked was "Are there any homicides I should know about?" "Of course not!" I told

her. After talking to me she realized I truly wasn't a homicidal maniac, but rather someone that was desperately struggling with life. And I was someone that was agonizing over the art of isolation without a soul in this wicked world to show me compassion or even care to understand. No one cared about my situation in life and I was damned to walk the dead end street of disillusion. I should have checked into the hospital that night, but I knew enough of the asylum to know that I once left it in greater pain than when I entered. Plus I was determined to stay with my current job. I had to work that night. I told the counselor that there was absolutely no way that I was going to the hospital. She didn't know what to do, especially after I told her that I had a suicidal fixation. But I convinced her that I was stable enough to go to work that night and continue with my life. I was deeply ashamed for what happened and it was hard to even comprehend that I had lost it. But I convinced myself that I could get back up and put this behind me. I was soon released.

This was the only occasion in my adult life when my anger got the best of me. It was a disgraceful episode of emotional instability that will haunt me forever. Growing up I had a tendency towards aggressive behavior. My childhood was very hard to manage and I fell into a pattern of inappropriate behavior. As an adult I've had to learn to channel my anger in a way that is productive. The process of writing this book has been many things to me that I never had the ability to imagine during this episode. The therapeutic authority that language has over my own mind in carving the trajectory of self-

control is unbelievable. People that have a tendency towards violent mood swings benefit only from their own desire to better themselves. I've dedicated my life to see to it that I never erupt in violence or hurt anyone under any circumstances that I might find myself in. This one incident will always remind me how I have to work towards creating an outlet for my anger in whatever medium my madness takes. Anger can be an energy transfixed to form a fountain of creative communication. I've learned to manage my hostility for the sake of saving my soul. I monument my aggressive nature in this book as a way to learn from the patterns so that I never repeat them. The emotional workout of this book has been the saving grace of God in so many ways in which I now perceive myself as seeing clearly to the heart of my life.

I returned to work but never fully recovered on the job. I became the employee for everyone to complain about and my position became one of degradation. I hadn't the will to labor efficiently as the dog that I was. The episode was soon forgotten by all concerned in my family. Forgiveness was a philosophy that allowed me the will to change if I had it in me. But my life was reaching the bottom of the barrel quite quickly and there was no hope in sight that I might find salvation in conventional means. At the time I was always on the internet discovering that I was truly succumbing to a disassociated identity in a technical revolution that was carrying the world into a future that was no longer worth visualizing. There was the potential for an Atlantis of shared information and communication. But there

was just as much potential to completely annihilate the human element of decency and respect in a land where anything went. Diving into this jungle of type only made me long for the companionships of real interaction. My life in any arena was dead in my immaturity. And my madness of miscreation in the many rooms of what once was a palace lingered in longing to recreate my life. My inner world was once a haven for the heavens of hope. Yet at this time in my life any inner processes that I beheld were not of beauty or salvation. They were of betrayal and the destiny I once held to be harbored in the union of inner eminence was now a disaster of directions leading me to death. Something needed to be done to learn quickly the taste of delight again and advance me into the apparatus of an unusually concentrated bliss of oblivion. There had to be a place upon the fringe of space and time where every particle of matter beamed of beauty that healed the ugly stain of my life. I didn't want to work to acquire the sheer concentration of creativity. I wanted instant gratification to grant me passage unto paradise so that I might peel the layers of situation and discover again the core of the Self. One day while surfing the net I came across a drug called ketamine. There was an article that I read about the substance by Dr Karl Jansen. He was studying brain research at the University of Auckland when he came across the drug. His article contained information about ketamine and how it is known to cause a near death experience. In his article he stated that near death experiences are a result of a blockade of brain receptors for the neurotransmitter glutamate. He

referred to this blockade of brain receptors as drug binding sites. I didn't fully follow what he was talking about and I relay this information to the best of my ability to understand it. Neurology is not my strong point. But the article had my full attention. He stated that some conditions that result in near death experiences are low oxygen, low blood flow, low blood sugar, and temporal lobe epilepsy, which release a large amount of glutamate. From what I gathered from the article when a large amount of glutamate is released in the brain it over activates N-methyl-D-aspartate receptors. N-methyl-D-aspartate or NMDA receptors are what he called the binding sites. According to Dr Jansen a flood of glutamate also can cause a flood of chemicals similar to ketamine in the brain. These chemicals also bind to the NMDA receptors to cause the near death experience. From what I could understand this is what happens in the brain during a near death experience. Because the chemicals that are transmitted are similar to the chemicals in ketamine, the drug simply activates the right circuitry in the brain. He worked with the drug to cure alcoholics of their addictions. It was an experimental therapy and I believe it took place in Europe. One thing I remember reading was that people that had difficulty with relationships had a hard time letting go on the drug.

When he mentioned temporal lobe epilepsy as a cause of releasing these chemicals, some of my past experiences started to make sense. But there was only one problem with that theory. I was diagnosed with the illness after my head concussion, which would not account

for my visions proceeding the accident. Unless of course I always had temporal lobe epilepsy. That would explain a great deal of odd phenomena. A neurological anomaly is the science behind the impossible realizations of creation that compound in the theater of the mind. My vision was not an eccentric account of an over active imagination. It was an actual occurrence linked directly to the puzzles of a bursting brain of active volcanoes.

At the right dose the drug cuts off the senses completely. I read from experiences of other people that the high is comparable to being in virtual reality. One article spoke of being engrossed in images displayed in the theater of the mind. That captured my attention immediately. This was something that I thought I could really work with in simulating the creativity of my unconscious mind. It seemed to be an easy way to tap into the pleasure palace of the Self that I was so longing for. I also read that the drug is a disassociative and similar to nitrous oxide in intensity. The difference being that a high from nitrous lasted at the most five minutes, including the time it took to come down completely. An experience on ketamine lasted a couple of hours. I knew without a doubt that this was something I had to test in my own mad scientist's desire to modify my growth in one bold and daring shout of discovery. This was my Holy Grail and I wasn't one to work my way to the castle, the way God intended. I was one to touch extremes in concentrated consciousness and I hadn't the wisdom to pace my proceedings for the sake of my stability. I should mention at this point that I pursued this drug of my own accord and

was fully responsible for any outcome that I might have endured during the experience or as a result of it. No one convinced me to obtain the drug for its possible therapeutic benefits. I read just as much information denouncing the substance and was well aware that this was a more than risky venture. But the main reason why it fascinated me was its possible healing potential. And I was at a point in life where the possibilities of the drug as dangerous as it was offered me a chance to face death and grow incredibly from the experience. There wasn't much I had to lose in life. I believed a near death experience to have rehabilitative properties that outweighed any other form of therapy I could imagine. It was definitely a perilous parade that could have led me off of the edge of existence forever. But I was one to take great risks in life and the promise of beauty beheld in my own inner world was so tempting to take hold of that I was willing to try anything.

I read as much as I could about the drug and began a quest to obtain it. It's mainly found at the vet, as it is used as an anesthetic for small animals. But it was once used during the Vietnam War on injured soldiers until the hallucinatory side effects became known. I guess its okay for animals to hallucinate though. Anyway, I searched the Internet for foreign pharmacies and finally found one on-line that sold the drug. While I waited for the drug to arrive I spent more time researching. This is when I came across Timothy Leary. I had previous knowledge of him but was not aware to what extent he was into drugs until I found out about his use of ketamine. In the article

by Dr Jansen he quoted Leary as saying in regard to his use of ketamine that they were "experiments in voluntary death." To learn from death in conquering the fear was what I was after. Socrates claimed that the unexamined life is not worth living. Death was married with life in a holy union of recycled energy and rebirth. The side of sight that sees into the dark of night was one to be shown light upon the mysterious of the unknown. What treasures there were to be mined in madness on the moon of death had I the bravery to go forth unto the reaper's pull.

My life continued as it was while I waited for the drug to arrive. I hadn't much to look forward to in life. My family had little respect for me. At work I was dehumanized. This was an escapist drug. If to face the fear of death I could also venture to another realm of virtual reality and explore the treasures of my mind then I needed nothing else in life but to live a world away. I hadn't a world worth living in here on earth. I suppose a big part of me wanted simply to vanish in the vanity of the Prime Mover. When the drug arrived in the mail I was excited to say the least. But I was in no way shape or form prepared for what I was about to experience. I ended up waiting until I had a night off from work to try it. I sat down in my bed and injected myself three times with 300mg. It was a very dangerous overdose and the effects at that dosage were unknown to even those that experimented for years. The unknown was what I wanted. It was all or nothing. This was the moment of truth. I had waited an entire lifetime to peer behind the door. I was not going to be denied and I

wanted the bliss of concentrated creativity to caress my wounds and heal me with its magic wheel. But it was foolish of me to think that my delicate state of mind could handle the severity of the volcanic revelation to follow. After a minute my body started to go numb and in a furious panic I changed my mind. But it was too late. I fell back on my bed and cried to myself; "Oh my God I am dying!" And I was. Because I injected myself with such a large dose a lot of the experience I don't remember. Well, not that I don't remember, but it was so theoretical that in existence I was not of space and time. And how do you explain the complete and utter annihilation of the things that our minds are structured with to comprehend reality? What I do remember was so terrifying that I could have burned in the blazing madness of Satan himself as he held me to the bottom of fate and spit his fire in my face. My mind was somehow transformed into a phoenix of rubber as it bounced of the walls of insanity and lingered in the lava of an accelerating agony. Imagine that reality is a computer program. A program contains lines of code that execute in order. For example, the first line executes and then the second. Now imagine that you alter the computer program to contain a goto statement. A goto statement tells the program to goto another line in the program. For example, there are four lines of code. At the fourth line you add a goto statement that tells the program to goto line one. It goes to line one and then executes line two, and three. When it gets to four it reaches the goto statement and goes back to one and repeats the process indefinitely. Reality altered and in turn went into a loop.

The 'program" could not handle this new command and as a result it crashed. This was what the ketamine experience was like. I could do nothing to repair the program or bring reality back to its normal functions. Everything collapsed in on itself. My entire life never happened. All the experiences of my life were never real and neither was I. I was alternating very quickly between positive and negative worlds. There was nothing to hold on to. Existence was an uncertainty as I became being and non-being in an infinite moment. I knew I had screwed something up big time and that was the only thought that stayed with me in eternal damnation. As the drug removes the sense of space and time it creates an infinite experience in a bubble of sorts. I took into that bubble nothing but panic and fear and there I remained for eternity in an altered reality as real as any other. Perhaps Kant was wrong about immortality and such a thing exists when we remove certain conditions in which we perceive.

Working with the philosophy of Kant is the best way for me to understand the experience in rational terms. His concept of the noumenal as being that which is beyond the boundary of the brain's perception came clearer to me in the revelations that I had. This drug dissolved not only sensory information, but also the fabric of space and time. I was left to linger closer to the noumenal than I could ever have imagined. In this experience my life was never real as I was constructed by my brain to exist in my perception of myself. But also the entire history of the human race never happened. History itself had been a figment of my imagination in life. Every experience and

piece of knowledge that I acquired in life was stored within my brain and apart from the brain it didn't exist in terms that could be known. During this experience that data was eclipsed and made itself evident as only being information that was no longer relevant. Everything from the theory of evolution right down to the theory of the big bang was unfounded. The sky and the stars, the universe itself – all shadows of a world that never was. All the pursuits of science, the facts and the figures, the theories that we hold so dear, it was all nonsense. It bore no weight in the reality of the beyond. The weight of existence was crushing every concept, every idea, and every step of creation - the whole of all things ever conceived and the very essence of being imploded. The universe was a fabrication of my brain that was now being disregarded as immaterial to myself. All existence was on a path towards the improbability of itself. If it was possible for the mind to know everything at once I had opened a black hole that swallowed it all. It was too much to comprehend. There was a series of causes and effects that brought me to this point. They were astronomical. Every moment in history from the beginnings of the universe played a part in my life. I once read that something as insignificant as the flapping of a butterfly's wings can change tomorrow's weather. During this experience I saw all the causes that shaped the world and in turn shaped my life, which led me to this crippled reality. It was all so neatly planned. The universe seemed to unfold the way it did only for one reason, so that I would find myself in this hellish nightmare. The mind wasn't meant to know all of

existence at once and it flooded my consciousness with cosmic proportions of peril and damnation. I was witnessing the birth and death of creation. I could imagine all life as I knew it in a an anguished cry saying, "Oh my God Jon! Look what you have done to the universe!" I thought I was dead and gone forever in the fire of this fear and terror that tormented me in death's dark moon before the sun. But I would not accept this catastrophe that was forcing itself upon me. I struggled for the solid ground of matter and reason. I needed to seriously restructure myself and learn to contain the panic and fear that allowed me to succumb to this absurdity. The master of the absurd had never been more freakish in the lesson of my soul stretched across the bounty of being and handed to the grating gates of hell. I had a heavy load of unfinished business in this world and I knew it to be a matter of madness to somehow find a way to overcome.

As the drug started to wear off I was shifting in and out of the physical world. One second I was sitting up on my bed and the next second I was in some other dimension. This went on for what seemed like a lifetime. I would sit up on my bed and then fall back. After a while I regained most of the control of my body, although I was still very numb from the drug. The whole thing lasted about two hours, but I can say with certainty that I spent an eternity wherever I was. It took a while for all of this to sink in. I was just so happy to be alive. Just to see my room again was a blessing. Albert Einstein once said, "Reality is an illusion, albeit a convincing one." Well, I found myself

caught back up in the illusion. And I have to say that I was grateful for it. In Buddhist beliefs hell is a place where you receive an education. I have never known hell more furious in its black heart than in the hole of this experience. My ability to learn from this and grow has been more than amazing even to myself. Nothing in this world has ever destroyed me and I'm lucky to be alive. I've arrived stronger than I ever could have imagined after enduring this inferno of an unfortunate fate. This is a very dangerous drug and doesn't receive the attention it should. I would never suggest that anyone try it. The experience has taught me to pray and seek out God at any cost in the hope of redeeming myself before the center of the sun. I needed to somehow find a way to restructure and reassemble my existence into the integrity of honor and honesty that I once knew to hold in my heart upon the sight of creation.

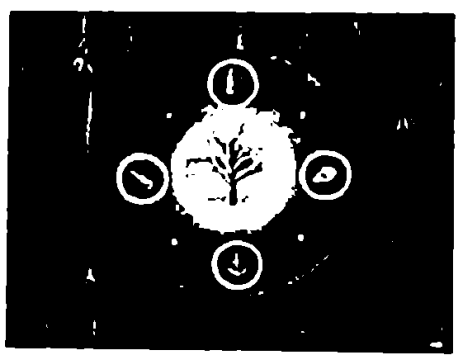
I continued with life unaware of how I was to organize myself and learn to grow towards the breath of the Great Originator. At home I was in the basement - a worthless worm. And though my family did love me and was able to forgive me for my instability I knew all too well that I was of little worth to them. I wasn't regarded with esteem during any period of my life and now that I hit bottom I had a mountain of immeasurable mass before my face as I saw my family. Just to look them in the eyes was to take a workout of strength that I had not yet understood how to tackle, as I was lost in the wooded path of immaturity. At work I was a mess and hadn't a soul there that cared to see me. I spent more time there reading than doing actual

labor. Without the comfort of words to offer me the light of an inner world I would have buried myself in the speaking skull of a rotting grave that vanished entirely into psychosis. The work of Jung and Jungian psychologist were what held most of my imagination to the light of the day. It was the empty terror of loneliness that had me grizzled in the light years of myself as I worked among the guardians of death that haunt the third shift. The works of dreams were a wonder that could harness an island among the worthless waste of the restaurant. I remember reading about one young man that had a forceful dream of an old wisdom. Upon having this dream he was told to forget about it. He was considered to be much too young to wonder in the ways of such an accomplished understanding of works that express the dynamics of the inner self. But the dream haunted him in a puzzle that he needed to network into his comprehension. The dream was not revealed to me as I read and I was enthralled by the story of this young man that had come upon something of an extraordinary nature. And I put the pieces of my own encounters in his place. Finally the young man found Jung and approached him with the dream. Immediately upon hearing of it Jung said the following: "Never join anything. Never marry. Your mission in life is to work on your inner world. And if that is all you ever do your life will have meant something." I just sat there and remember thinking how much the advice was poor and not possible in its adjacent place upon society. At least not for me as I put myself in the shoes of this young man. The dream turned out to be a succession of Buddha's. I

couldn't imagine that it was more powerful than a vision of the Self. And the torment of this breathing concept that once organized my psyche never stopped haunting me. What in the name of crying creation was expected of me in the madness of mankind as my own mind was submitting to the torment of itself? I never knew what to make of this vision or how to apply it to anything useful in life. The pure devotion to an inner world of immaculate conceptions of thought was a grail that I longed for my entire life. But it was never an option that I had the luxury of taking. The undertaking of this book as it deals so much with my inner world was partly inspired by the words of Jung as he advised this young man to dedicate his life to his Self. But it was going to be some time before I could find a way to make sense of the many pieces that had shrouded the puzzle in madness.

I had my artistic outlets on canvas at the time and the only means by which I knew to organize my inner world. My one true friend was living in color in creative combinations. I continued with my paintings as a way to keep grounded. I made a conscious decision to work on mandalas. I needed to reorganize myself. For my first attempt I did a painting of a circle. Inside the circle was an opening that showed a tree in the dead of winter with snow on its branches and clouds in the background. From the outer ring of the opening the colors blended from yellow to green to blue to red. Just like in my vision. I decided that this would not be a copy of my vision and put four smaller circles inside the ring of colors. They were placed at the north, the south, the east, and the west. The north circle contained an

image of a bottle; the east circle contained an image of a mask; the south circle contained an image of an anchor; and the west circle contained an image of an old telescope used on ships. The entire circle was placed on a wooded surface. Outside of the circle on the wood there were three hornets. I had no idea what any of this meant. It still confuses me. What I did know was that it was a portal into the dead of winter where the hornets could not travel. And I knew that the tree represented me. I was dead inside or at least in hibernation. After winter there was to be a summer. So the tree would bloom again. It was a question of when. This was what made painting so enjoyable. I created my own dreams in the waking of the day and knew to sculpt my growth towards a greater consciousness.

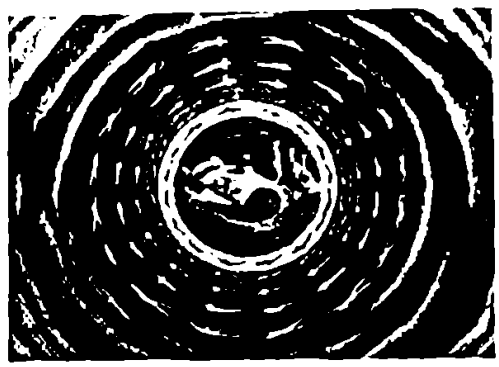


But I wasn't satisfied with the first mandala. I tried a second one. This particular piece came out better than I had anticipated. It consisted of five rings. Each were different shades of blue. The inner ring being lighter as the outer was darker. In the outer ring there are sixteen figures swimming clockwise. In the next ring there are

another sixteen figures. In the subsequent ring another sixteen figures appear, but they are now half dolphin half-human. They looked like mermaids. In the next ring are the same amount of figures but this time the dolphins have the heads of a human. In the inner most ring are sixteen dolphins. Outside of the circle is a gray fog that encompasses it. The evolution of human into dolphin was an attempt to revert back to the center of the Self. I was trying to transcend the fog that filled my life and make my way back to the center of my psyche.

The only problem was that I didn't know what should go in the center. I thought about it for a while and then all of a sudden I remembered a dream that my father once told me that he had about me. In the dream my father was standing on the shore of the ocean with one of my brothers. I was in the middle of the ocean and floating on the surface in a small submarine. I proceeded to go under the water. My brother turned to my father and said, "Look he is going under." Then my father said, "That's all right, he'll come back up." But I never came up again. My father said that I just kept going deeper and deeper. When my father told me about the dream I smiled because that was I in every last detail. I was always digging as deep as I could. Anyway, from that I decided to put a futuristic submarine in the center of the circle. It seemed fitting. In the back of the submarine I put three columns to show the remains of an ancient city. I didn't want to go all the way down there and find nothing. The painting was wishful thinking and a way to embrace my depth. I had a

delving desire in me my entire life and thought it fitting to accept it as reaching the center of creation and returning with the knowledge of God's lost land.



In the process of my explorations on canvas I was about to make a giant step towards independence. I had just turned twenty-five and found my own apartment. The process of going from my parent's basement to living independently was a tremendous plunge. Although it was Section Eight housing, which is assisted living for the disabled, I was very much on my own. This was the best thing that could have happened for my state of mind in finding myself apart from my parents. Embracing liberty from my family was going to skyrocket me into an accelerated process of growth. My family had a poor perception of me my entire life and never offered a mirror that allowed my self-esteem to blossom. But on my own I was going to find solace in sanity as a design unto myself. I was going to discover that I had miraculous properties of development in creative countries

of originative redemption. And amends was going to augment my madness in the merriment of miracles for the first time in years. I was to find a way into the window of words as the world of what I hoped to be atonement for the wreckage of my past.

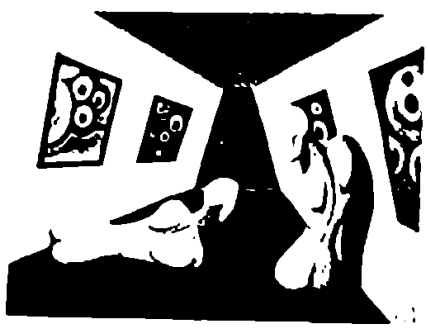
Soon after moving a cousin from California contacted me. She had visited with my parents and saw the painting of the man with the gas mask. It blew her away, as my art was capable of doing to people in its solid speech of surreal sanctity. My art was the direct link to the Greater Good of my unconscious mind in the healing of wounds that wreaked havoc on my world for duration's of death. It was a spiritual process of advancement into stepping beyond the boundary of past periods of pain and punishment. Striking to gaze upon in its grueling depiction of the iron mask it was a supernatural curse that I bore briefly in the basement of my life. To face a pain such as that brought a moving miracle upon the heart of my cousin to wonder of the wisdom that lied beneath the buried ruins of image and illness. I had only seen her once in childhood and she was a second cousin on my father's side. She was attending UCLA at the time and was a history major hoping to teach. We began a correspondence over email and I found in her a savoir that knew enough to allow me the process of bringing together the pieces. There was a huge contrast in the consciousness of California in relation to the East Coast. Her mind was open to anything and everything that I wrote in my wandering eye of an ethereal recapturing of reality. At work I was worthless and to my family I was a juvenile of an unstable journey. But in

correspondence with my cousin I was an artist, a poet, and a philosopher. She inspired me with such elegance and grace to trust and take hold of my heart in an attempt to rekindle the flame of creativity. My vision was once again reborn from the ashes and certain in the cement of language, as I knew it once to be of pure thought only. But now the heart was drawing me closer in connection with my letters that I knew my cousin to be a deity of direction towards the grand epiphany of the Great Originator. She took an interest in my art that no one ever dared do so deeply. She wanted to know me as the artist. No one ever attempted so painstakingly to bring forth that part of my personality to a position of paradise upon the striving of my creativity to conquer the mountain. Women were such an inspiration that I knew them so clearly as the cultivators of my own strength in composition of any artistry I acknowledged as my new challenge.

I continued to paint with the knowledge that I had found a friend in life that understood clearly the trials and tribulations of being behind the buried burden of the mask. I was graced with the grandeur of the gods to have a soul that sought to take my hand and walk me towards a greater maturity in life. During my correspondence with my cousin I began to notice in myself that I was developing quite rapidly when I had someone that was supportive and understanding of my journey. I was witnessing my growth as I never did before and it was an unusual process of miracles that meant madness hadn't the heart to hound me in hell forever. I could mature given the correct

direction and emotional support to flower my potential. And I was realizing quite quickly that I had unlimited potential in life was I to leave the mask behind and behold the beauty of my inner being as that which is true to my actual form.

Under my cousins esteem of my creative calendar I came across the concept of my greatest masterpiece. I wanted to capture the intensity of my ketamine experience on canvas. I painted a small room with a warped perspective. At the end of the room is a door and the viewer is looking towards it. On either side of the room are two statues without limbs or faces. One has fallen and the other is leaning against the wall. On the wall are hanging paintings of gears without any teeth. This was my *White Room.*



I chose a curved figure for my statues. The accentuated figure looked more expressive. I chose two statues to represent the disassociative aspect of the drug. Both statues are immobile and have no apparent means of sensing. Though fixed in their form a sense of motion in the bodies can be seen. They can not see, or hear, or speak,

or touch with limbs. Yet in the painting there can be seen to be a telepathy at work between the two of them. In the disassociate state I was aware of myself as being separated. There was no greater self-connecting these two halves, but there was an interplay of being between the two of them. At the time of disassociation every concept of the greater self turned into a flashing light in the dark. Being became a drama of segments. I thought two statues would be enough to capture this disconnection. In the painting they are incapable of helping each other. They are trapped in their form. They are trapped in the room. The door is there for them, but they are incapable of anything but being. The paintings on the wall are of gears that move but without teeth the machinery that they work is disabled. The paintings represent an error in the progress of time, as is the eternity of the experience. This is what we are in life. We are damned to exist before the door of death. From birth we are thrust into being with no possible means of escaping. We are brought into the absurd. I suppose the door represents belief and what is beyond comprehension. So I left myself some room for the imagination. I sometimes think of the painting as the very distant future. And I wonder if human evolution may lead itself into that very predicament. Also there seems to be a point in depth that reaches the bottom of the brain's ability to delve deeper. The complete annihilation of sensory information in which the conscious being exists only to itself apart from everything that can be known is the level of the ocean floor.

And so I delved as deeply as I could to bring this back to the surface. With the support of someone to trust in life I was in an accelerated state of evolution. I decided to collect my art in an original environment that had the potential to evolve with my own growth. I came across a computer program called *Flash*. It was pure intoxication to involve myself in the mental merriment of this ingenious software. It combined everything from conventional creativity to digital expression. And it wrapped it up with the interactivity of the Internet as an extension of the human mind that will progress forever into the far reaches of a dynamic future. I was able to augment an inner world with image, sound, and interactivity. The expanding terrain of the Internet is the hierarchy of the heavens where art comes to life and evolves into a living entity of infinite possibilities. I know that the images in this book will not do justice to the originals so I will include the site for anyone that happens upon this book and finds interest in this aspect of my personality. It can be visited at Jdgemma.iwarp.com. The potentiality of this program to produce the basic structure of the human mind is more than unlimited. And with the evolving structure of the Internet and advancements in software engineering this program and others like it will create that bridge bearing the imagination to walk across its structure. The specter is a living spirit of animated energy that will live in the heart of machinery.

I had fun with the website and enjoyed it as much as I possibly could. Creation is joy and I knew to evolve in the healing process of

my imagination. But there was a destiny that hadn't unfolded for me and redemption had been a puzzle for many years. I've longed to be redeemed before the eyes of God during the entire duration of my dreary life. And in that longing I've made an even bigger mess of mistakes that I hadn't the knowledge to clean. My cousin came to me from the heavens as an angel of art and creativity and expanded that aspect of my personality to a position of great worth upon my path in life. Redemption was in my gifts and the only vessel to heal the scars that had bloodied my face for years. Writing to my cousin my imagination in words would flower with forests of becoming. The person I longed to be my entire life I was realizing when I wrote to her. And this was an odd phenomenon that I hadn't known with another human being in quite some time. It suddenly just came to me and my entire life made sense. I was going to write a book.

And that was what I did. I approached my aunt who had enough writing experience herself to be a guide in growth and an editor of my madness. I began a three-year journey with language as my bride as I tied myself to the tree of the word. It has been a painful process to embrace my past and look upon my life with my naked mind. I've never known myself to be so dedicated to a project in my life and I've been as passionate as possible in the purity of my heart as is the savior of my soul. The book has gone through many revisions and was very angry at one point. During the process of my writing I have received support from many people in my family. I have gained a position in life in regards to my family where I am respected for my dedication to

my evolution in words. Towards the end of my work my mother approached me in praise of my struggle to advance into the augmentation of individuation. "I don't say this just because I am your mother. But I've never met anyone like you. Most people with an illness drink their lives away and burden their families. But you look at yourself and you simply decide to change. I've never met anyone that can grow as you do." My mother is the first to criticize me and attack a flaw in my character. This was the first time in my life that she offered me her praise. I felt as though I was worth all the effort I put into myself as I desired to be someone that I could be proud of. Even if her praise comes only once in a lifetime. But now I've reached the conclusion and what am I to do?

The hardest part about writing this book has been determining the final trajectory of thought to match the mirror of my present life. The current river of my world as I walk through the days of these words situates me far from the positions that we often think of in terms of praise. I am barely surviving in this world and haven't a pot to piss in. The present can lead me into too many roads of which are not worth mentioning as they all arrive at the end of my own time. The greater of the paths lead to the same question that we all ask. Where do any of our lives truly go? And there has been a question so painful upon the labor of my lust to gain the grail. When it comes down to the final dance in the end zone of this grueling game will any of it have mattered to anyone but me? Many years ago I placed an ideal harmony of an empyrean consummation in a viscous circle of joy at

the end of my life, as I once knew myself to gaze upon the majesty of my own manual. I imagine such a light awaits those of us that wish to see it in the darkness of even the day as it drains our spirits through this tunnel of time. And that end has now come to beckon me as with my words I have worked more feverishly in my final stand about humanity. I suppose there is something to do about this Satan of insanity that I hold above my head in this dance of ink that drips from the lust of my tongue. I've been led to the exhaustion of my existence in my own parade of marching madness where the absurd shan't conquer me upon the core that I have so solemnly sought. I can't imagine that I hold more in me than the thin air of my own suffocating lungs. And I write of myself to the greatest degree of what I am in the candle that comes to quickly burn out in the pattern of my life.

There are no rules when writing a book upon the thoughts that echo the candor of the naked mind, or at least I imagined there shouldn't be as I wrote with the impassioned love of my own honesty. There was nothing to tell me how personal or intimate I could or could not be. And the ardent freedom to explore my mind as it branches into a tree in the paradox that now grounds me to the earth has been quite an experience. The only roadblocks that faced me in the hazards of demons were of the world in my head as fear was to be feared itself. But what is this thing that we destroy ourselves over in the wake of a catastrophic faux pa? There is a white intensity of noise flowing through the veins just before the unveiling of hell and it

blisters the skin of the soul as we walk through the valley of death. Yet the imagination always seems to predominate the actual outcome. Fear is a tangible object like clay and it can be sculpted into the shapes of confidence as an energy that is irrigated from the flood of a river. It can be thought of in abstract terms as you shape it into something docile and harmless. It can be seen in our expressions and then manipulated with the vigor of the will as that is what guides us even through the doorway of death. And I've dragged myself through the intestines of every horror and wicked laughter of psychotic fiends that shred the flesh of my soul in order to write this book. I imagine I've given everyone the blueprints from which to demolish my life in a feast of criticism and circumstances of which I must face. As my grandfather might say, I've died a thousand deaths. And as doing so my ability to handle the exposure is no ones concern but my own. Some people are willing to live their entire lives without ever taking a leap of faith. I've been broken in the burdens of a life that hasn't a shot in the heart of humanity that I can risk it all in one bold breath of hope. I've nothing else to do in life. The comforts and securities of a private life are the lambs of sacrifice that I make in what has been my duty as a human being. We do have our duties and we are better people for having taken responsibility. Somehow this book had always been awaiting me to discover it. I never lived in an ordinary world as I crawled through the tunnel of space and time. But somehow I've made reality even more surreal than I could have possibly imagined. Life becomes a profound test of convictions when

you play the instrument of destiny and throughout my life I have been given the diagrams of such a fate. This is even true when that destiny is no more than a monastic discovery of oneself. The success of my writing reaching a large audience will never parallel the fortune I have found within my inner world. I would never have been able to begin this project if I did not truly love the person I once believed I was capable of becoming. My words have been the most useful instruments in working with my inner world in order to find a harmony with an external reality. And this book has been an instrument that has aimed to humble me in humility. More importantly it has done so in the eyes of a Creator as in this process I have held an intimate relationship with the heart of my joy as it spins its many signs and characters around the center of a sensational light.

My cousin never saw me as anything other than an artist. After reading the first draft of the book she told me that she kept asking herself why anyone would care about my life unless I was able to define who I became as a result of writing this. And to her I have always been a brilliant and unusually gifted artist. The whole book was to lead to the final resolution of myself as a surrealist. A glorious metamorphosis was to transpire as I overcame great adversity and madness to see myself as an astronaut of reality on canvas. But the fact of the matter is that most people wont care about any of this no matter who I come to be in the end or how I come to see myself. Nothing has ever gone smoothly for me and the sign of my birth has been a burden to bear even before I learned to crawl. I was born with

an old man's soul wrinkled in the pain of pressures beneath the feet of God and it was to be carried through life in the contradiction of tender youth that knew not how to wield the wisdom of himself. It would be foolish to believe my life so important as to warrant the praise of my walking with words. I have enough letters of rejection to prove that my life is not even interesting enough for you to be reading. My aunt has had me believe that my life holds treasures to teach in the philosophy of my story. She has been overly enthusiastic throughout this process and even insistent that I will be at book signings. Me of all people will be signing my name on your book. I don't know that I am that important to be regarded as someone whose signature will ever mean anything. I love my aunt for believing in me during this process, and I wouldn't have finished it if she didn't. But she is biased and I've had to be the one to ground myself in the harsh realities that this isn't necessarily of worth to anyone but myself. A man can leave his greatest accomplishment to linger in the monument of his cemetery, but that does not always mean that people will visit his grave. I have had to match my mirror with the face of what is plausible in this world. I amazed myself in disbelief by doing this and know that I am a mind that is capable of realizing a wealth of its potential. But in reality my life means something to only those that I know in close relations. I also know I am of an age as advanced as I can push it that is still not influential enough to make a splash in the ocean of a literary world. Reality was not in my vocabulary when I started this project, but the face of time has come to tick towards the

revolution of myself in a great realization. And I must place hope only in the things that whisper in my own voice as it leads me to the treasures of an ideal harmony in investments that are of creation in the joy of itself. The fact of anyone gazing upon me as I reflect in the rippling pool of my naked mind will be enough to make that reflection an identity of worth in which I have become. But as is I am blessed with a limitless luck to have a select few in my life that actually do care. Much of life is about seeking those individuals out, and often times they will find you. Though life does seem to be a series of hellos and good-byes its important to me at least to learn as much as I can from others in the time that we do have together. And I have always been a quick study. But in the humility of my life I cant in good conscience make an outlandish claim as to the virtuosity of my mental aptitude and my superior soul without making a fool of myself. I actually went as far as to situate myself as a member of an alien race after a talk with my cousin. And one day I would once again join in harmony with my family of superior entities as I reclaimed the supremacy of my own being. That is what writing can do in the farfetched fantasy of having been to the afterward of words when you write upon the majesty of mania. As a child I hoped to be associated to the world through my art as I sat above my dresser and basked in the glory of what I could become. I've only incorporated my website into this book to illustrate the sheer power of creativity as an extension into the further reaches of an inner world that potentially never has to end. And I suppose in a way I have claimed a victory, as

I am sure that someone will read this and see that I have realized a goal in their own eyes. But I'm not a child anymore and in the process of writing I've had to learn to calm the power of the impractical as I dream too much about my youth. My art has served a greater purpose than sitting in a gallery and proving my own mastery to the world. It is no longer the solitary factor that I weigh the earth with. I don't have the ego to make the transformation into a surreal rapture of self-importance as someone whose contribution as an artist is significant. Though I can say that in writing this book and assessing my character I have come to conclude that it is at times bizarre to be me. It is a way in which I walk about the world as now having been born with all of my might. I've taken a very unusual path in life and initself this thing that manifests in my flesh has been afoot about a journey that even I regard as often being too unreal to imagine. As far as my art is concerned the artist that I am is simply a facet of my personality that comes into mind when I need to tell myself something about the nature of reality. Or simply when I want to make love with an inner process. I honestly don't care about the art world anymore as having a place in it, and I don't really know that my art is operating on a level that has something revolutionary to offer. I'm not concerned with being recognized for my art in the way that most artists are. My work is personal to my own analysis and it is a feedback from which I can restructure or understand parts of myself. And I've used my art the way it was meant to be used at the very fundamental level of expression. In the same way that it holds

meaning to Jungian psychologist. I used my art for its healing potential. I only incorporated my work into this book to show the power it has as being therapeutic and enhancing self-esteem. Plus I wanted to illustrate the thundering might that art can have over an artist of a mental illness whose love of creation occasionally stimulates a personal interaction of going mad within a piece. In the healing of art I bring attention to my gift as being something that can be used by everyone. The other aspect is simply something that I find in accordance with the mania of my illness. The Skill and technique are things that come in time. The average person has the ability to utilize the healing power of creation in its various forms. But gifts themselves should not come to define the individual. The individual should come to define his or her gifts as parts of the whole. Everyone has a gift that is unique to them and as sad as it is some people let theirs sleep a lifetime. But the essential structure of the human being is not the characteristics of those gifts. At times I use images that come to mirror the composition of myself, but those reflections do not define me. When I look in my mirror I can adjust my appearance, but I'm simply playing with shadows. I don't look at a photograph of myself and see everything that I am. I see a shadow of myself in the essence of a moment that fails to capture the complete picture. Perhaps in the far future there will be a device of psychic nature that duplicates the collectivity of the human psyche allowing a view into the essence of a being. But since my art has never been able to perform such a feat it remains a part of myself that fails to define me.

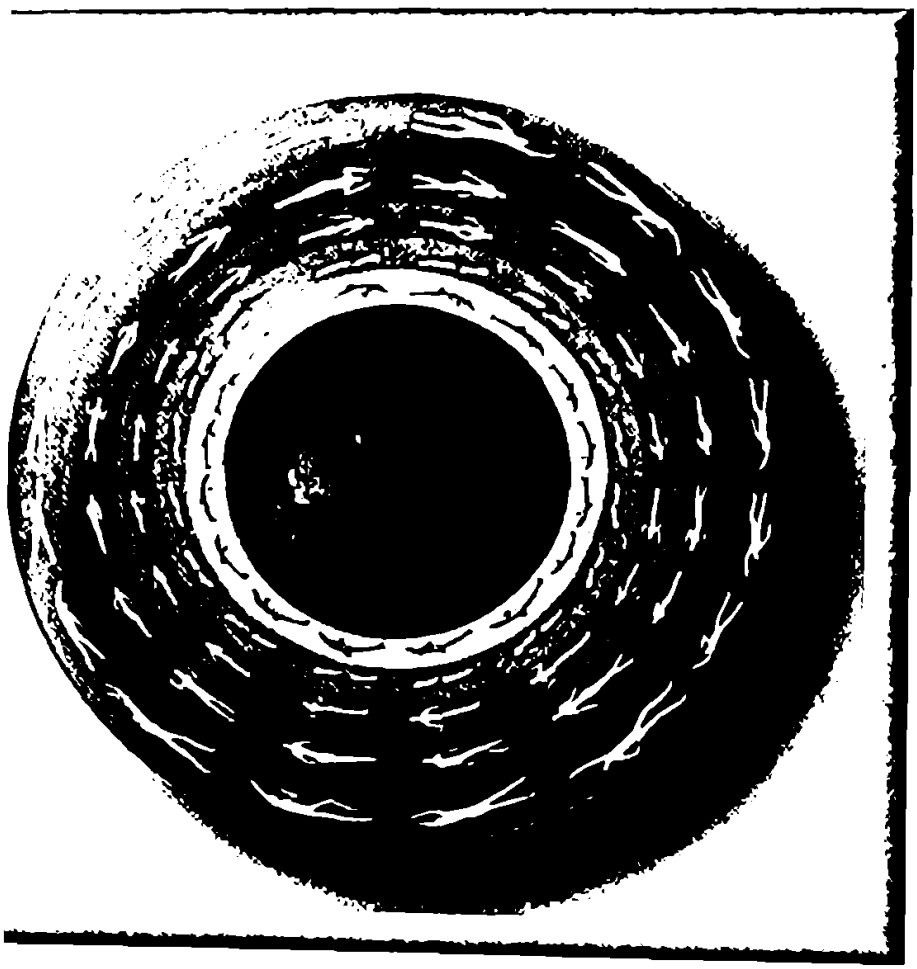
Even my words do not quite come close to a fictional device of this nature and the missing pieces of language are left for the reader to imagine. If my art were to characterize my entire personality this book would be entirely about that aspect of myself. But there were many anomalies in my life that I am sure even those that are not talented can relate to. It was always more about discovering a philosophy and creating a mandala of my life than making my way into the art world. And much of this has been about advancing myself into manhood and learning to love the hermit within the wonder of words. There was never a clear line that I crossed in becoming a man until I evolved my intellect and emotions in the breath of my birth unto a stronger being. I definitely think myself more of a philosopher that happens to be creative. And rather with the writing of this book I can come to define myself as a human being. I can't think of a more accurate and deserving description that occupies the heart of all of us. We all need to feel those inalienable rights that sit beneath the structure of what can occasionally be a dehumanizing world when we don't belong. Those of us that have fallen on our faces time and time again have to fight for those rights. And we are capable of getting up. Not only that but we are capable of doing so in a way that touches others. We all hurt in our own way and we all harbor the pain of being in the foothold of flesh. Being these creatures that we are at our most fundamental level in transcendence of our secularity is the greatest gift that can be bestowed upon any of us and we all share it. I've suffered in my illness for most of my life doubting my own

knowledge of myself. I once knew my heart to rejoice in the taste of creation. I lived with absurdity in the absorption of pessimists that stole from me what I once knew so passionately to be true in the overwhelming evidence of my own neurology as it exposed a mind preexistent to my own. And my life was so convincingly finite in the opinion of others. There is nothing more pointless than a birth unto death. And existence is the greatest absurdity known to itself. But on the edge of existence there does indeed lie a door. We all must face this in the end and with the working of my will my writing has been stepping towards the threshold of death. It's the lives that we lead that speak for courage or for fear in the face of this test. It's what we do in this world that determines our ability to open that door when it presents itself. The struggles of senseless figures having touched too soon upon the door of death before organizing in preparation are never equipped to freely relieve themselves of being. And the possibility of a natural river in a great ease is dependent upon believing in our own integrity. But belief is something of a magician's act as he can make his apprentice disappear. It can leave us in times of trouble and is something that must be forged in life until it comes to dwell in the heart. And as it does the preparation is what comes to define meaning and purpose as it characterizes the certainty of the ideal in an otherwise senseless existence. I've prepared thoroughly in the process of my words and in the schematization of my inner world. If it is the frozen lips of death that I must caress in an eternal kiss then I choose to do so in this blazing

Zeppelin of no return. I've written every one of these words as though they have been my last breath upon the winds of the world. And I've wished in the wisdom of my humility to be a man that left his greatest passions to blossom from the fire of his final work. After all, what kind of philosopher would I be if I never came to accept my own death? But even so this book is not a self-righteous suicide and I condemn the weakness of giving up. Rather it is an entrance unto the *Twilight Zone* of a traveling tomorrow where I find my footsteps upon the fire of facing death. And I face the beast with all the bravery that I will ever be capable of. Death brings itself upon us in many forms and words themselves can lead us to the gravity of our grave. But in death should always be rebirth and a life must make its way towards something significant lest its journey be for nothing. Nothing waits for those that invest in it. At night I've walked with the death of the day and it drains the life from my mind in the door that I enter with my inner eye. But in the morning through the clouds I see the sheer joy of the sun shine its rays upon the delight of my eyes as they graze in the grass of something glorious. Rebirth is patterned everywhere in the cycle of creation. Life is a recyclable process that we have witnessed with our own eyes as we live it and we need not fear the end no matter how painful a proceeding we imagine it might be. The final stage of life should be open to the possibilities and proceed with the wonder of what's to come. I've known death to be terrifying, but I've also known joy in its purest form and no matter how the world will ravage my reality I choose to believe that it waits for me on *The*

Other Side of Sight. And when we remove that fear and place faith in the possibility in order to realize our potential in the most humanized way we see ourselves for everything that we are within our being. Gifts have the potential to be the creative vessels of a symbolic departure, but even pyramids left the eminent power of nobility to a slow decay in the ruins of illusion. The chimera of an outward identity that we spend our lives building in the bricks of our own monuments is left only to decompose on earth. The factual form of the Self is in essence preexistent to the structuring of our lives, which brings me to the great paradox of this book. In establishing an intimate connection with the inner certainty of my personality I have at the same time built an outward sculpture of my existence. This transcendence of societal fabrication in delving into the raw material of life is what now finds me in society. The added bricks of an outward identity of mistakes have only come to build a well around the basic nature of truth that rests in the water of permanence. I have become an unusual union of inner and outer worlds. In drawing closer to the reunification of the Self, as Jung might have interpreted my vision of cosmic order, the ability to strengthen the mind in the impending adaptation for the inevitable is the greatest salvation that I could have known in life. An individual as comprised of necessary inner work that is continually disregarded, who is unwilling and unprepared, will vanquish into the succumbing of an inevitable absurdity. Or so, from experience I have found to be true. There are things in life that must be completed before our peace upon departure.

My responsibility in the eyes of an Originator has been the climbing of words in which I can see clearly the union of height and depth as matters of the mind that speak in a seesaw of my own unfolding unto a greater wisdom of myself. The labor of this book in the dramatic overcoming of my own fears has been my craft unto an eternal life. I don't claim to know anything that hasn't already been articulated in some shape or form. But what I know of my often-distressing life I can express in the strength and faith that this book is a profound testament to the organizing principle of the Self. It is quite possible that all of this in the culmination of the ending may come to resonate much louder than I expect in the weight of my own realization. But it will have been for nothing but my vision of a spinning joy, and some things are worth walking across the thin ice of existence for. I've done this simply so that I might reunite with the Creator of myself. Whom without I am nothing.



About the Author

Although Jon has suffered from a mental illness since birth, he has never allowed it to overcome his incredible talents. His artistic genius presented itself when he was quite young. Throughout his tumultuous life, Jon has created an impressive and extensive art collection and has produced a series of unique web designs. His passion to create is a need to establish inner healing in the way in which he steps outside of himself as a spectator of his character. His work serves as both a launching pad for personal growth and interpersonal communication in his often generous way of touching others with his art. In addition to his visual art creations Jon has recently completed his most unique and insightful progeny – *The Other Side of Sight.*

Printed in the United States
6697

Stemmed from the shock of a painful childbirth in February of 1974, Jon Gemma arrived into the world screaming and seemed resolved to a life of solemn tears. Plagued with migraines as a young boy, he spent his early developmental years isolated from social interaction with other children while succumbing to the clutches of his own mental anguish. Deemed a burden at school and met with confusion and frustration at home, he withdrew into the realms of the mysterious headaches that were continuously left untreated.

In the grief of solitude, Jon retreated into a world of imagination marked with terrifying hallucinations and paranoia. Unable to voice fear of the demons that now invaded his mind, he reacted to his personal nightmare through aggressive behavior, directed most towards his younger brothers that he felt in constant comparison to. Failed by the mental health system and misdiagnosed by bewildered physicians, he was labeled as hyperactive and left alone to fight his raging battle of the mind.

With the onset of puberty Jon discovered that he was physically attracted to members of the same sex. Raised in a Catholic family that looked down on gay relationships, Jon felt ashamed of his bisexuality and more isolated than ever before in his desires. He searched desperately for understanding in the form of a companion and found acceptance in a select group of delinquent teenage boys. Thus began his frenzy experimentation with drugs and exposure to a lifestyle of petty crime.

Finding escape in the form of LSD, Jon felt he'd found an answer to the pain of his daily existence. In wandering through the garden of drug induced thought, he imagined he'd emerged into a new level of creative genius and found beauty in the glory of altered states. In actuality the drug was proving to be his downfall as he found himself growing more and more dependent on his habit.

As his behavior became increasingly erratic, Jon was hospitalized and underwent several neurological tests with the purpose of determining the cause of his bizarre actions. Through the work of psychiatrists he found a new term for his rare disorder: Schizo-Affective. For the first time in his life Jon had an answer. Gaining strength from his heartbreaking ordeal, Jon began to let go of his inhibitions and found courage in learning to love himself.

The Other Side of Sight paints the portrait of a brilliant artist and philosopher coming to terms with his disorder and learning to embrace spirituality as an emotional healer. Jon reveals in honest expression the years of hiding behind a mask of humiliation deriving from the confusion of his illness. Having walked along the depths of insanity, Jon bears his soul in an effort to shed understanding on mental illness and emerges an inspirational figure of immense proportions.

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ISBN 1-4033-2942-7
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